VIII

ANNUAL REPORT

ON

LABOUR IMMIGRATION INTO ASSAM

FOR THE

Year 1879.

SHILLONG:
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1880.

No. 2,733.

FROM C. J. LYALL, ESQ., C.I.E.,

Offg. Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam,

TO THE SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA,

HOME, REVENUE, AND AGRICULTURAL DEPARTMENT.

Shillong, *dated the 20th August* / *issued the August* 1880.

GENERAL DEPARTMENT.

SIR,

I AM directed to submit the Report on Labour Immigration into Assam for the year 1879, and to express regret for the delay in its submission, which has been caused by unusual press of work and recent changes in the Secretariat.

2. The percentages of deaths and desertions have been calculated on the principle prescribed in your letter No. 97, dated the 17th May 1880.

3. It will be observed that the Return No. 26, Part IA., showing the deaths and percentages of deaths according to locality and sex for dependents of Act-VII. coolies, for non-Act coolies under three years' residence, and for non-Act coolies over three, years' residence, has not been submitted, in accordance with the instructions contained in your letter No. 82, dated the 16th April 1880.

I have the honour to be,

SIR,

Your most obedient Servant,

Offg. Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam.

REPORT ON LABOUR IMMIGRATION INTO ASSAM FOR THE YEAR 1879.

CHAPTER I.

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION.

SECTION 1.—IMPORTATION AND JOURNEY TO DESTINATION.

THE subject of the importation of coolies and the journey to their destination is fully dealt with in the Report of Inland Immigration for the district of Goálpára, which treats specially of the Dhubri route, and in the Inland Immigration Report of the Government of Bengal; these reports have already been separately submitted to the Government of India. The Chief Commissioner need here only notice the increasing popularity of the Dhubri route, which during the year was used by 8,000 emigrants, or 57 per cent. of all those who came into the Assam districts during that period. The figures show incontestably that it saves much in time, and that the loss both by death and desertion is far less by this route than by any other. On the other hand, the numbers marching up by the Trunk Road from Dhubri were less numerous than in the previous year, and the experiment does not seem to be gaining in favour. With the greatly diminished mortality on board the steamers which has been apparent during the year, and with the promised diminution in fares which will be noticed hereafter, this result would not be a matter of regret if only the Steam Companies would also ensure improved speed and greater punctuality.

Extension of Chapter 13 of Act VII. of 1873 (B.C.) to North-Western Provinces, Oudh, and Behar coolies.

2. The most important event during the year was the extension, by a notification in the *Assam Gazette*, dated the 30th April, 1879, of the provisions of Chapter 13 of Act VII. of 1873 specially to labourers from the North-Western Provinces, Oudh, and Behar. The notification was issued in exercise of the powers conferred on the Chief Commissioner by Section 2 of Regulation IV. of 1877, and in consequence of the very serious mortality among this class of coolies during the year 1878. The Chief Commissioner was thus enabled, without closing a garden entirely to all Act-VII. imported labourers, to close it specially to labourers from these parts of India, when it appeared that the garden was unsuited to them. Inquiries made by Committees assembled under the provisions of Section 118 of Act VII. of 1873 showed that it was specially to unacclimatized coolies of the above class that the gardens in regard to which the inquiries were held were unsuited, and that seasoned coolies of two or three years' residence in the Province were well able to resist the climate. Accordingly, on these gardens the importation of fresh coolies of this class was alone forbidden. The effect of this order has been found to be most beneficial to the gardens to which it was applied. Moreover, as has been pointed out by the Deputy-Commissioner of Cachar, in whose district these gardens are situated, the advantage of the action taken is not merely confined to the particular gardens to which it has been applied. The power thus vested in the Local Government to prohibit fresh importations, and the evidence given of its determination to make use of this power where necessary, have very much strengthened the hands of the Deputy-Commissioner in his representations as to the mischievous effects of the importation of unsuitable coolies. Managers of tea-gardens are generally fully alive to the importance of these considerations, but they frequently urge that they are powerless in the matter, and that, notwithstanding repeated representations to their agents, the latter still continue to send up coolies of an unsuitable type. In such cases, it is now possible that the agents should be informed that unless the despatch of such coolies is discontinued, their importation will be forbidden by law, so that in many instances the desired effect has been produced without any recourse to the provisions of the law.

Unsuitable coolies.

3. Complaints of the importation of weak and sickly coolies have been much less frequent during the present than in the former year. Almost all Inspectors notice that there has been a marked improvement in the coolies imported. But, as will be seen in a subsequent chapter, the number of coolies imported has diminished enormously.

From Upper Assam a few complaints of the arrival of unsuitable coolies have been received, and, as far as was possible, inquiries have been made as to the circumstances of their enlistment, but without any very satisfactory result, as it is clearly most difficult to show that a coolie who is found to be sick or weakly on arrival at his destination was so when enlisted, especially when, rightly or wrongly, he has been passed by the inspecting medical officers. It would much diminish the danger of unsuitable coolies being recruited, if the planters' agents who engage the coolies would exercise a more careful preliminary inspection before accepting the labourer from the contractor. It is because the manager has a more direct control over the recruiter that recruitment by garden-sirdars instead of by contractors has received such an extension, and if the agents, who alone can exercise any control over the contractor, were to be more strict in their selection of the coolies offered to them by him, the present disfavour in which the contractor's coolies are held would certainly diminish.

Prohibition of recruiting from Lohardugga.

4. On the 3rd February, 1879, a notification was issued by His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, forbidding the recruiting of labourers under Act VII. of 1873 (B.C.) in Sirgoojah and the other tributary mahâls of Chota Nagpur, and the public were informed that the Deputy-Commissioner of Lohardugga would countersign no certificates for recruiters which were intended for use in those mahâls, and would register no labourers brought from thence. Of the motive of this order, which it is surmised was issued on political grounds, the Chief Commissioner is not aware.

Improvement of the steamer voyage.

5. Considerable discussion has taken place during the year as to the feasibility of cheapening and improving the steamer service on the Brahmaputra. The Government of Bengal have now informed the Chief Commissioner that the Steam Companies have agreed to make the following concession in their charges, and to secure greater regularity in their service, in return for certain modifications of the rules in regard to the deck space to be reserved for emigrant labourers.

The conditions are that the journey from Dhubri to Tezpur shall be accomplished in five days, and from Dhubri to Dibrugarh in nine days, that the fare to Gauhâti shall be reduced from Rs. 12 to Rs. 5, and that to Dhansiri Mukh from Rs. 15 to Rs. 10. On this understanding, the deck space to be provided for each adult will be reduced from 12 to 10 superficial feet in November, December, and January, and from 14 to 12 superficial feet during the rest of the year.

6. In paragraph 5 of last year's Report, the Chief Commissioner observed that "the question of providing an accelerated steam service, which was originally brought before the Government of India in 1874, and has since been frequently urged by the Secretary of State, was also the subject of much correspondence between the Government of India and the Chief Commissioner. On the failure of any acceptable tenders, Sir Steuart Bayley proposed that such a service be started by direct Government agency, in communication with the Northern Bengal State Railway. The proposal is still before the Government of India, but it is improbable that during the existing financial pressure, any provision can be made for what is nevertheless the great desideratum of the Province." The Chief Commissioner was subsequently informed that the Government of India were unable to give him any assistance whatever in forwarding this project, and that he must look for financial resources to his Provincial assignment, and endeavour to persuade the existing Steam Companies or the Agent to the Eastern Bengal Railway to develop an accelerated service. The project was thus thrown back to the limbo from which, ever since 1874, it has been struggling to emerge. The Chief Commissioner was convinced that an accelerated passenger service was not a project which the existing Steam Companies would take up. Their fleets are built specially with a view to heavy cargo, carried on flats, a system wholly incompatible with the desired speed or punctuality, and a quick passenger service would, though to a small extent, be directly injurious to their interests. He communicated with Mr. Prestage, but unsuccessfully. The Eastern Bengal Railway Company cannot themselves run steamers on these waters, and any Company working in their interests would work from Goalundo. While, in order to receive assistance from the Government of Bengal, without which the Chief Commissioner could do nothing, it was essential that the line should work in communication with the Northern Bengal Railway.

The result of the negotiations entered into by the Government of Bengal with the Steam Companies is noticed above, and as to start a complete service is obviously impossible with the slender resources at the disposal of the Chief Commissioner, he is now in communication with the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, with a view to establishing a link in the chain of communications by starting a daily steam service between Dhubri and Gauháti, in communication with the Kaunia and Dhubri Service, which has now been placed on a sound footing under His Honour's direction, and which has already proved a great boon to Assam.

Measures connected with the inspection of steamers by officers under the Assam Administration.

7. At the suggestion of the Chief Commissioner, the way-bill of the steamers has now a list of questions printed on its back, which serve to remind Inspectors of the more important points to which their attention should be directed in conducting their inspections.

It having been brought to the notice of the Chief Commissioner that in some cases the masters of vessels, on their arrival at a station, land coolies and communicate with the shore, although there may be on board persons suffering from cholera, and that this might endanger the health of the public unless such communication was properly controlled, it was ordered that Inspectors should telegraph warning to the next station up the river if cases of cholera were found by them on board the steamer. Masters of vessels were also forbidden in such cases to allow coolies to land without the Magistrate's order. It was also found necessary to direct that patients suffering from small-pox or other eminently contagious diseases should not remain on board under treatment, but should be landed at the first station at which they arrived after the disease showed itself, as it was thought too dangerous to allow such patients to remain on board crowded vessels, even though confined to the hospital.

Marching by the land route.

8. As was promised in paragraph 11 of the Report on Labour Immigration for last year, special arrangements were made for the care and inspection of labourers marching by the land route to their destinations. The serais were improved and wells dug, where necessary. Rules were issued, prescribing the arrangements which were to be made by the sirdar in charge of the marching party for meeting the needs of the coolies in respect of food, clothing, medicines, &c., on the journey. Inspection at the sadar stations through which the gang would pass was also provided for, and a simple form of way-bill for showing the casualties on the march was introduced. The rules are not yet fully understood or known, having only been finally sanctioned in December last, but the Chief Commissioner looks for improvement in this respect next year. Sir Steuart Bayley regrets to have to notice a case in which a whole gang of labourers was enticed away by a native garden manager while on their way to their destination. The offender was convicted and suitably punished.

Buildings and Public Works.

9. Several improvements were sanctioned and effected in the Dhubri depôt, and a grant of Rs. 1,000 was sanctioned for this purpose. The Jakai coolie-depôt in Cachar was destroyed by fire. The buildings were re-constructed at an expense of Rs. 499-8. A grant of one lakh of rupees was made for the improvement of the road from Dhubri to Kaunia, which, even if the contemplated railway is not laid down on it, affords a valuable line of communication with Kuch Behar. This expenditure was sanctioned by His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, in whom is vested the control of the Labour Transport Fund.

The question of making a depôt at the Disangmukh, in the district of Sibságar, was under consideration during the year, but, as the planters, for whom alone the depôt would have been of use, would not undertake to share any of the expense which it would have entailed, the Chief Commissioner did not feel justified in recommending that the necessary expenditure should be incurred entirely by the Labour Transport Fund.

Verbal engagements.

10. It was brought to the notice of the Chief Commissioner that some coolies, who had been imported without written agreements, but only under verbal engagements, had on their arrival at their destination been put under three years' written agreements. After consulting the Legal Remembrancer of Bengal, a circular was issued, explaining that a coolie who, even without giving a written agreement, has been imported at a planter's risk and expense, and on the understanding that he is to labour for that planter, is an emigrant within the meaning of Section 7 of Act VII. of 1873, the indefiniteness of the contract forming no bar to the application of the section. Such an emigrant can, however, only contract for one year. It was further explained that this did not apply to coolies immigrating at their own risk.

Extension of period of contract from three to five years.

11. It may be noticed here that the question of recommending the extension of the term for which an emigrant can contract from three to five years has been under the consideration of the Chief Commissioner as part of a general scheme for re-considering the provisions of Act VII. of 1873, a proposal which will be more appropriately considered at another place in this Report.

Section II.

Mortality among Madras coolies.

12. The Chief Commissioner is glad to be able to report that the exceptional mortality which occurred among Madras coolies in 1877 has not been repeated, and that this year the death-rate of this class is not specially high. This confirms the views which Sir Steuart Bayley expressed in Section II., paragraph 1, of Chapter I. of last year's Immigration Report. The Government of Madras have asked for an expression of opinion on the subject of the advisability of removing the restrictions which it would appear are maintained by that Government on the importation of Madrasis to Sylhet and Assam, and the Chief Commissioner has been able to reply that, with due care and precautions in the selection of coolies, no special danger is to be anticipated from the adoption of this measure. The power which has now been conferred upon this Administration to close any garden which may be found unsuitable to this class will afford ample protection to the labourer, as, speaking generally, this Province is not unsuited to Madrasis; their average mortality for the series of years from 1876 to 1879 was 10·37, but, while it was 15·31 for Act-VII. coolies, *i.e.*, new arrivals, it was only 2·91 for non-Act, and therefore acclimatized, coolies. The high percentage of 15·31 is almost exclusively due to the high mortality among Act-VII. Madrasis in 1877, which was exceptional, and the recurrence of which the Chief Commissioner hopes may be guarded against by a stricter examination of immigrants before they leave the recruiting districts in years of scarcity.

Mortality among North-Western Provinces coolies.

It has already been said that the heavy mortality which occurred among North-Western Provinces coolies in 1878 led the Chief Commissioner to extend the provisions of Chapter XIII. of Act VII. (B.C.) of 1873 specially to these labourers, and, in exercise of the power thus conferred, a few gardens have been closed to new importations from the North-Western Provinces, Oudh, and Behar. The result has been most beneficial. Considerable decrease is shown in the mortality among this class in 1879, their average rate of mortality being this year 4·67, as against 9·70 last year. Importations of this class have much diminished this year, being for the whole Province 4,043, as against 8,419 last year. At the same time, a much better labourer has been imported, and complaints of his unfitness for the work of a tea-garden have been much less frequent. The Chief Commissioner is of opinion that these facts bear out the opinion expressed in paragraphs 1-3 of Section II., Chapter I. of last year's Immigration Report, *viz.*, that the exceptional mortality of last year was due to the large importations of labourers who were previously reduced in strength by the hardships they had undergone consequent on the scarcity in their own country. No further action would, therefore, seem to be necessary, beyond carefully watching the immigration in seasons of scarcity and rigorously rejecting at the inspection all immigrants who are unfit for labour on a tea-garden.

Labour returns.

13. The question of improving the labour returns submitted by employers has received the continued attention of the Chief Commissioner, and, in accordance with the wishes of the Government of India, conveyed in their letter No. 100, dated the 4th July, 1878, from the Department of Revenue, Agriculture, and Commerce, arrangements are being made to try experimentally the system of maintaining nominal-roll registers at each garden, and submitting copies of all entries made in these registers to the Inspector of Labourers, in whose office all the returns will then be compiled. In consultation with several planters, registers have been prepared, and will shortly be issued for experimental adoption. It is hoped that this will lighten the labour of compiling the returns to the planters, though it will entail much extra care and labour in the Inspectors' offices.

In accordance with the wishes of the Government of India, expressed in their Resolution No. 177, dated the 11th November, 1879, on the Immigration Report of Assam for 1878, and their subsequent letter, No. 97, dated the 17th May, 1880, the calculation of percentages according to average strength has been abandoned, and the calculation is now made separately for each half year, and the sum of these percentages is taken to represent the mean annual percentage.

While discussing the subject of returns, the Chief Commissioner cannot omit to point out that the absence of power to compel the submission of returns from gardens which do not employ Act-VII. labourers renders the returns for the whole Province incomplete. He has already recommended that a Regulation should be passed to render the submission of such returns from all gardens employing more than 50 immigrants compulsory, and a draft has been submitted for the approval of the Government of India.

The general question of the amendment of Act-VII. of 1873 is under the consideration of the Chief Commissioner, and the opinions of District Officers and leading planters have been invited on this subject. A petition has been received from the members of the recently formed Tea Districts Association, urging the amendment of the Labour Act, but it brings to notice only a few specific points on which amendment is desirable, and is chiefly confined to general remarks. This petition has been forwarded to the Government of India, to whom it was addressed.

Suspension of contract during imprisonment.

14 A reference was made to the Chief Commissioner whether a labourer who was imprisoned for a criminal offence under the Penal Code, and not merely under Act VII. of 1873, could count the time during which he remained in prison as service towards the completion of his contract. Act VII. of 1873 contains special provisions, declaring that the term for which a labourer may be imprisoned under the provisions of that Act shall not count as service. After consulting the Legal Remembrancer, instructions were issued, explaining that Act VII. of 1873 did not abrogate the general provisions of the Indian Contract Act, IX. of 1872, but only provided special remedies to meet special cases. The provisions of Section 39 of the Indian Contract Act would therefore apply to such a case, and a labourer by committing a criminal offence for which he is imprisoned does not, in consequence of thus disabling himself from carrying out his contract in its entirety, release himself from his liability to complete his engagement on his employer's garden. Consequently, if the employer wishes to proceed with the contract to its completion, it is at his option to do so. Inspectors of Labourers have therefore been directed not to refuse to certify the extension of the period at which the contract may be concluded in such a case.

Desertions

15. Desertions still continue to be very frequent, though this year shows a considerable decrease in their number, as compared with last year. The Chief Commissioner still maintains the opinion he has formerly expressed as to the inadvisability of interfering for the protection of the employer so long as the employer himself does not call for such interference, and prefers to submit to loss rather than undergo the necessary restraints by which alone an efficient check could be put upon the practice of desertion.

A complaint has, however, been made that systematic enticement of coolies is practised by the managers of a group of gardens which are all under one agency in South Sylhet, and bordering upon the sub-division of Háilákándi, in Cachar. In the absence of detailed evidence of the circumstances, the Chief Commissioner is unable to say how far these charges are capable of being supported. But he considers that such a practice, if it exists, is a very different matter from mere ordinary desertion, and such an offence, when proved, should be dealt with most severely. Sir Steuart Bayley looks upon the enticement of coolies during the currency of their contract from neighbouring gardens as a criminal offence of a very serious nature, and he hopes that, as far as possible, this practice may be put a stop to by the infliction of exemplary punishments whenever it may be brought home to any offender.

Sir Steuart Bayley has replied to the petitioners, pointing out that it is for the person injured in the first instance to give such information and proof as will enable the criminal courts to deal with the matter, and that, till this is done, no useful action can be taken by the Magistrates.

Inspection of tea-gardens.

16. The powers of an Inspector have been conferred on the Deputy-Commissioners of Sibságar and Lakhimpur, and the Assistant-Commissioners at the sub-divisions of these districts have been invested with the powers of Assistant-Inspectors of Labourers.

The annexed table shows the number of gardens which employ Act-VII. coolies, the number which employ non-Act coolies only, and the number of visits of inspection made to these gardens for the years 1878-79:—

Name of district.	Number of existing tea-gardens.						Number of tea-gardens visited once only in the year.						Number of tea-gardens visited twice in the year.					
	Tea-gardens employing Act-VII. labourers, either exclusive of, or together with, other labourers.		Tea-gardens not employing Act-VII. labourers.		Total.		Tea-gardens employing Act-VII. labourers, either exclusive of or together with other labourers.		Tea-gardens not employing Act-VII. labourers.		Total.		Tea-gardens employing Act-VII. labourers, either exclusive of or together with other labourers.		Tea-gardens not employing Act-VII. labourers.		Total.	
	1878.	1879.	1878.	1879.	1878.	1879.	1878.	1879.	1878.	1879.	1878.	1879.	1878.	1879.	1878.	1879.	1878.	1879.
Sylhet	38	43	30	42	68	85	22	30	21	8	43	38	7	4	..	..	7	4
Cachar	126	129	47	52	173	181	99	82	45	23	144	105	20	21	..	2	20	23
Kámrúp	8	8	72	96	80	104	..	6	..	..	..	6	7	..	..	..	7	..
Darrang	50	63	66	60	116	123	3	8	..	..	3	8	44	48	..	..	44	48
Nowgong	25	30	68	101	93	131	5	7	..	..	5	7	12	15	..	..	12	15
Sibságar	137	143	62	73	199	216	96	106	12	33	108	139	20	27	1	7	21	34
Lakhímpur	116	135	68	65	184	200	52	89	15	14	67	103	7	26	..	1	7	27
Total	500	551	413	489	913	1,040	277	328	93	78	370	406	117	141	1	10	118	151

Name of district.	Number of tea-gardens visited thrice in the year.						Number of tea-gardens not visited during the year.					
	Tea-gardens employing Act VII. labourers, either exclusive of or together with other labourers.		Tea-gardens not employing Act-VII. labourers.		Total.		Tea-gardens employing Act-VII. labourers. either exclusive of or together with other labourers.		Tea-gardens not employing Act-VII. labourers.		Total.	
	1878.	1879.	1878.	1879.	1878.	1879.	1878.	1879.	1878.	1879.	1878.	1879.
Sylhet	....	7	....	....	....	7	9	2	9	34	18	36
Cachar	4	8	....	....	4	8	8	23	2	27	5	50
Kámrúp	....	....	....	....	....	....	1	2	72	96	73	98
Darrang	2	4	....	....	2	4	1	3	66	60	67	63
Nowgong	....	6	....	....	....	6	8	2	68	101	76	103
Sibságar	2	10	....	1	2	11	19	....	49	32	68	32
Lakhímpur	2	1	....	....	2	1	55	19	53	50	108	69
Total	10	31	....	1	10	32	96	51	319	400	415	451

* The difference between these figures and the figures given in the Tea Report is owing to a revised list of gardens having been subsequently prepared.

17. It will be seen that there are 551 gardens employing Act-VII. coolies, as compared with 500 last year. Of these, 328 were visited once only, as against 277 in 1878; 141 were visited twice, as against 117 last year; and 31 were visited three times, as against 10 last year. There were thus in all 703 visits paid to this class of gardens, against 541 visits paid in 1878.

18. Of gardens not employing Act-VII. coolies, 489 were registered this year, as against 413 last year. The greater part of this increase is nominal, and due to a revision of the lists of gardens. In some cases two or more gardens hitherto classed as one garden have been registered separately, and a few small gardens which had hitherto escaped attention have been brought on to the registers. There have been 78 gardens not employing Act-VII. coolies visited once, as against 93 visited once last year, 10 visited twice, as against 1 last year, and 1 garden was visited three times. There were thus 101 visits paid to gardens of this class, against 95 in the previous year.

19. Altogether, therefore, it will be seen that more inspection work was done in 1879 than in 1878, as 804 inspections were held in the year 1879 and 636 inspections in 1878. On the whole, the Chief Commissioner thinks that, except perhaps in Lakhimpur, the duty of inspection was sufficiently carried out. The 23 gardens employing Act-VII. coolies in Cachar which were not visited during the year are represented to be gardens whose continued good management and healthiness render their frequent inspection unnecessary, and this plea for exemption from inspection the Chief Commissioner accepts, though he has directed that their inspection should not be neglected for two years in succession.

For the deficiency of inspection of gardens in Lakhimpur the Inspector of Labourers of Upper Assam is not to blame, as, owing to necessary changes of officers, the inspections he had planned and counted on being performed by the Assistant-Inspectors could not be carried out. A large number of gardens not employing Act-VII. coolies have not been inspected in the districts of Kámrúp and Nowgong, which is owing, apparently, to an impression on the part of the District Officers of these districts that such inspections are not required. The Chief Commissioner, however, thinks that District Officers would well employ their time in visiting them when their duties take them in the neighbourhood of such gardens, even though there is at present no law making such inspection compulsory.

CHAPTER II.

GENERAL STATISTICS.

SECTION I.—IMPORTATIONS.

During the year 1879 only 24,712 persons of all classes were imported, against 43,061 imported in 1878. This shows a decrease of 18,349 persons, or 42 per cent. A table is given below, showing the number of each class of persons imported for the last three years. It will be seen that the decrease was very large under every class, contractors' coolies decreased by 39 per cent. and sirdar-recruited Act-VII. coolies decreased by 44 per cent. Non-Act importations have also largely diminished:—

		1879.	1878.	1877.
Act-VII.	Garden-sirdars	11,161	19,972	14,382
	Contractors	4,458	7,390	8,286
Non-Act	Adults	2,667	4,827	3,095
	Children	4,541	8,299	4,760
	Infants	1,885	2,573	1,374
	Total	24,712	43,061	31,897

Cause of decrease in importations.

The reason generally alleged for this decrease is the good harvests in the recruiting districts, which made the coolies unwilling to emigrate. It is possible also that the comparative scarcity in the recruiting districts in 1878 led to an abnormal number of immigrants being imported in that year. If this were so, a fall in the number of importations might naturally be expected in the present year. The fall is much greater when compared with the year 1878 than in comparison with 1877. Another reason alleged is the general unwillingness of managers to accept recruits from the North-Western Provinces, owing to the mortality which occurred among them last year, and the very unsatisfactory class of recruits that were obtained from those provinces during the two past years. It is said that, but for this dislike to engaging them, many more immigrants could have been drawn from the North-Western Provinces. It is also to be remembered that the fall in the price of tea, leading to diminished returns, has induced economical working of all gardens, and, with the rise in the cost of imported labour of the quality required, there has been a natural tendency to restrict importations as far as possible. There is, however, an almost universal complaint that the importations of this year have not been equal to the demand.

Condition of imported labourers.

2. It is satisfactory to be able to record a great improvement in the condition of the labourers imported. The complaints of a bad class of coolie having been imported and of the imported labourer arriving in a weak and inefficient condition, which were so common last year, have been rarely made during the present year. It might have been expected that the difficulty in recruiting labourers would have led to the importation of a worse instead of a better class of labourer. But the fact is not so. It is probable that high prices and short crops have an immediate effect on a large proportion of the population in the recruiting districts, and while, on the one hand, it induces them to emigrate in large numbers, on the other hand it reduces their strength, so that a larger proportion than usual of the immigrants are weakly and unfit for labour. When, on the contrary, the harvest in the recruiting districts is good, the effect is at once apparent in the improved condition of the labourers who emigrate.

Localities from which coolies were imported.

3. As in the Report for last year, a comparative statement is here given, which shows the localities from which the coolies were imported in 1879 and 1878. In this table, adults only are considered, and children and infants are omitted:—

		Act-VII.				Non-Act.		Total.	
		Garden-sirdars.		Contractors.					
		1879.	1878.	1879.	1878.	1879.	1878.	1879.	1878.
Bengal	Men	720	2,003	635	944	425	624	1,780	3,571
	Women	637	1,582	477	992	462	481	1,576	3,055
	Total	1,357	3,585	1,112	1,936	887	1,105	3,356	6,626
North-Western Provinces	Men	1,275	2,752	792	1,130	446	1,023	2,513	4,905
	Women	669	1,946	471	823	390	745	1,530	3,514
	Total	1,944	4,698	1,263	1,953	836	1,768	4,043	8,419
Chota Nagpur	Men	4,342	6,634	1,249	1,997	441	1,097	6,032	9,728
	Women	3,515	5,012	800	1,380	477	812	4,792	7,204
	Total	7,857	11,646	2,049	3,377	918	1,909	10,824	16,932
Nepal	Men	.....	3	5	10	.....	.....	5	13
	Women	.....	1	.....	9	.....	.....	.....	10
	Total	.....	4	5	19	.....	.....	5	23
Madras	Men	3	27	17	73	9	29	29	129
	Women	.....	12	12	32	17	16	29	60
	Total	3	39	29	105	26	45	58	189
Bombay	Men	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
	Women	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
	Total	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Total	Men	6,340	11,419	2,698	4,153	1,321	2,773	10,359	18,346
	Women	4,821	8,553	1,760	3,236	1,346	2,054	7,927	13,843
GRAND TOTAL		11,161	19,972	4,458	7,390	2,667	4,827	18,286	32,189

It will be seen that this year, as in 1878 and 1877, the largest importation was from Chota Nagpur. Coolies from this region are certainly the favourite labourers, as, on the whole, they suffer less than other classes on the gardens, though they suffer considerably more on the journey from their homes to this Province. It will also be noticed that, while the importations of coolies from nearly all other localities diminished by about one-half, the Chota Nagpur recruits show a considerably smaller diminution.

Free immigration.

4. The extent to which free immigration has been going on during the year cannot be ascertained. But looking to the diminution of non-Act imported labourers, it is not probable that it has materially increased. An attempt will be made during the year 1880 to register the free immigrants at Dhubri for the Assam Valley, and at Bhairab Bazar for the Surmá Valley, and, if these attempts prove at all successful, the Chief Commissioner hopes to be able to give some interesting details on this point in next year's Report. The importance of the subject cannot well be overrated, as free immigration is at once a measure of the popularity of this Province with the labouring classes, and, free labourers being much cheaper and more satisfactory to the employer than contract labourers, it is to the extension of free immigration that an improvement in the position of the employer must be looked for. It is most desirable, therefore, to obtain as accurate statistics of free immigration as possible, but this information cannot be obtained without difficulty.

SECTION II.—STATISTICS OF THE LABOUR FORCE IN THE PROVINCE.

5. In addition to the 24,712 persons imported in 1879, there were 59,262 otherwise obtained. As explained in last year's Report, nearly the whole of this number represents merely book-transfers. The losses from all causes during the year were 77,965. The year opened with a total of 179,216 persons on the gardens, or, as shown in the returns for this year, owing to the non-receipt of returns from 13 gardens in the district of Sylhet which submitted returns last year, 178,095 persons.

Below is a table showing the total force at the beginning and end of the last three years :—

		31st December 1879.	1st January 1879.	1st January 1878.	1st January 1877.
Act-VII. labourers		44,372	49,930	46,765	44,549
Non-Act	Adults	76,383	70,865*	63,813	55,411
	Children	41,025	36,343*	27,854	20,921
	Infants	22,324	20,957*	18,642	14,926
Total		184,104	178,095*	157,074	135,807

* 71,650 } According to the returns for 31st December 1878. The
* 36,600 } difference is owing to non-receipt of returns from 13 gardens
* 21,036 } in Sylhet for 1879.

*179,216

6. It will thus be seen that there has been a steady increase in the total labouring force, and this has continued during the present year, notwithstanding the largely diminished importations. The number of labourers under Act VII. has decreased considerably, and is now lower than it was three years ago. As their three-years' contracts expire, this class becomes absorbed in the class of non-Act labourers, and the numbers of this class may be expected annually to decrease, unless the unlooked-for extension of cultivation should take place.

7. A table is given below, showing the nationality and sex of the non-Act and Act-VII. adult labourers in this Province at the end of 1879 :—

Nationality.	Sex.	Act-VII.		Non-Act.		Total.	
		1879.	1878.	1879.	1878.	1879.	1878.
Bengal	Men	5,022	7,780	16,843	16,092	21,865	23,872
	Women	5,222	7,710	15,305	14,084	20,527	21,794
North-Western Provinces	Men	4,357	4,755	8,555	9,470	12,912	14,225
	Women	3,317	3,688	6,807	6,735	10,124	10,423
Chota Nagpur	Men	14,453	14,229	14,963	13,160	29,416	27,389
	Women	11,451	10,963	13,355	11,542	24,806	22,505
Nepal	Men	6	5	37	38	43	43
	Women	.....	1	11	12	11	13
Madras	Men	341	520	300	302	641	822
	Women	166	233	207	215	373	448
Bombay	Men	25	33	.....	.....	25	33
	Women	12	13	.....	.....	12	13
Total	Men	24,204	27,322	40,698	39,062	64,902	66,384
	Women	20,168	22,608	35,685	32,588	55,853	55,196
Grand Total	.....	44,372	49,930	76,383	71,650	120,755	121,580

This table shows that the number of Bengali and North-Western Provinces coolies have slightly diminished, but that the coolies from Chota Nagpur have slightly increased. The proportion of women to men has also somewhat improved.

Section III.—Desertions.

8. There were in the present year 5,885 desertions, against 7,515 last year, which is a decrease of 1,620. The percentage of desertions of Act-VII. coolies to actual strength was 4·51 for 1879 and 5·29 for 1878, and for non-Act coolies the similar figures are 2·65 and 3·38. There has thus, it appears, been some improvement in the matter of desertions, but their number is still very high.

9. A table is given showing the details of desertions according to nationality and sex:—

Nationality.	Sex.	Act-VII.		Non-Act.		Total.		Percentage of desertions among							
								Act-VII.				Non-Act.			
								1879.		1878.		1879.		1878.	
		1879.	1878.	1879.	1878.	1879.	1878.	Annual strength.	Actual strength.	Average strength.	Actual strength.	Annual strength.	Actual strength.	Average strength.	Actual strength.
Bengal	Men	472	631	526	628	998	2,187	7·80	5·13	7·36	5·23	3·06	2·20	4·08	2·74
	Women	198	410	324	518	517		3·11	2·18	4·70	3·40	2·15	1·56	2·80	2·54
North-Western Provinces	Men	822	1,365	700	1,048	1,522	3,270	17·05	11·85	27·27	16·21	7·93	5·02	11·04	6·56
	Women	248	366	369	500	617		6·84	5·06	9·58	5·96	5·64	3·63	7·34	4·47
Chota Nagpur	Men	909	923	593	521	1,502	1,952	6·05	4·54	6·90	4·66	4·04	2·76	4·21	2·88
	Women	279	199	360	309	639		2·88	1·81	1·92	1·32	2·78	1·97	2·94	1·96
Nepal	Men	2	2	4	9	6	18	40·00	20·00	8·33	11·76	10·80	7·40	20·93	12·00
	Women	....	....	1	2	1		....	....	....	....	9·09	7·14	15·38	9·52
Madras	Men	43	42	13	23	56	73	10·45	7·76	6·82	5·11	4·33	3·21	7·41	4·82
	Women	14	5	9	3	23		6·97	5·66	1·89	1·57	4·35	3·20	1·40	1·08
Bombay	Men	4	9	....	....	4	11	14·28	12·12	23·07	20·00	....	....	....	....
	Women	....	2	....	....	....		....	....	14·28	12·50	....	....	....	....
Total	Men	2,252	2,972	1,836	2,229	4,088	7,515	8·54	6·18	10·76	7·23	4·48	3·07	5·93	3·87
	Women	734	982	1,063	1,332	1,797		3·35	2·50	4·23	2·92	2·05	2·15	4·27	2·79
	Total	2,986	3,954	2,899	3,561	5,885	7,515	6·20	4·51	7·78	5·29	3·82	2·65	5·18	3·38

In this table the percentages are calculated both according to the new system directed in the Government of India's letter No. 177, dated the 11th November 1879, and No. 97, dated the 17th May 1880 (which for convenience may be called the percentage according to annual strength), and according to actual strength, for the year 1879. For the year 1878 the percentages are calculated according to the average strength and the actual strength. Comparing the percentage according to actual strength for the years 1879 and 1878, it will be seen that in regard to Act-VII. coolies the percentage of desertions has slightly increased amongst the men from Nepal and the men and women from Madras, and amongst the women from Chota Nagpur. Amongst all other classes of coolies the percentage of desertions has diminished. The falling off in desertions is particularly marked amongst North-Western Provinces men, among whom it has fallen from 16·31 to 11·85. Comparing the percentages according to actual strength for non-Act adults for 1879 and 1878, it will be seen that in the case of women from Chota Nagpur and women from Madras the figures show only a very slight increase of desertions in 1879. In all other classes there is a falling off in the percentage of desertions for 1879.

10. The North-Western Provinces show the largest percentage of desertions to actual strength, next come the Chota Nagpur coolies, and next Bengalis. This is not, however, the order of mortality amongst these classes of coolies; as it will be observed further on that Chota Nagpur coolies show the highest mortality, next North-Western Provinces coolies, and lastly Bengalis. The remarks, therefore, made at paragraph 13, page 12 of last year's Immigration Report, require some qualification, as, notwithstanding that the mortality amongst North-Western Provinces coolies is less than the mortality amongst Chota Nagpur coolies, the North-Western Provinces coolies still bear away the palm for desertions.

11. A tabular statement of desertions, considered district by district, is given below:—

District.	Total desertions.		Act-VII.		Non-Act.		Percentage of desertions among							
							Act-VII.				Non-Act.			
							Actual strength.		Annual strength.		Actual strength.		Annual strength.	
	1879.	1878.	1879.	1878.	1879.	1878.	1879.	1878.	1879.	1878.*	1879.	1878.	1879.	1878.*
Sylhet	1,006	1,923	216	642	790	1,281	0·67	15·72	8·91	22·74	5·92	9·37	8·23	14·99
Cachar	2,779	3,554	1,277	1,874	1,502	1,680	8·31	9·12	13·13	13·83	3·23	3·49	5·03	5·66
Kámrúp	3	57	1	13	2	44	0·26	4·54	0·40	5·60	0·21	6·35	0·34	8·88
Darrang	422	312	259	228	163	84	3·66	3·29	4·86	5·00	2·36	1·46	3·28	2·12
Nowgong	392	201	336	160	56	41	10·30	6·27	15·41	11·12	2·17	1·71	3·75	3·00
Sibságar	762	834	514	535	248	299	2·65	2·40	2·85	3·51	1·04	1·41	1·35	1·89
Lakhimpur	521	694	383	502	138	132	2·19	2·66	2·97	3·87	0·90	1·03	1·23	1·47
Total	5,885	7,515	2,986	3,954	2,899	3,561	4·51	5·29	6·20	7·78	2·65	3·38	3·82	5·18

* These percentages are calculated on the average strength.

The most marked decrease in desertions occurs in the districts of Sylhet and Kámrúp, while in Nowgong there has been some increase.

12. It appears from the above table that among Act-VII. coolies desertions diminish in the following order :—

	1879.	1878.
1	Cachár.	Sylhet.
2	Nowgong.	Cachar.
3	Sylhet.	Kámrúp.
4	Darrang.	Nowgong.
5	Sibságar.	Darrang.
6	Lakhimpur.	Lakhimpur.
7	Kámrúp.	Sibságar.

This, as will be seen further on, does not correspond with the order of the several districts as regards the percentage of mortality amongst this class, which is:—

1	Darrang.
2	Nowgong.
3	Sibságar.
4	Lakhimpur.
5	Cachar.
6	Kámrúp.
7	Sylhet.

The order of death-rate among all classes together and of desertions among all classes is :—

	Death-rate.	Desertions.
1	Nowgong.	Nowgong.
2	Darrang.	Sylhet.
3	Lakhimpur.	Cachar.
4	Sibságar.	Darrang.
5	Cachar.	Sibságar.
6	Kámrúp.	Lakhimpur.
7	Sylhet.	Kámrúp.

Taking the percentage of importations during the year to the total coolie force, the following list will be obtained -

1	Kámrúp	43·42
2	Nowgong	40·69
3	Darrang	25·81
4	Lakhimpur	17·91
5	Sibságar	15·03
6	Sylhet	9·79
7	Cachar	9·26

No very close agreement can be observed in any of these lists, nor is it to be expected that such should occur. As was explained last year, though there is undoubtedly some connection between mortality and desertions, the latter are influenced by several other conditions, such as the comparative ease with which desertions are effected and the difficulty of detection, which vary in different districts.

Both for Act-VII. coolies and non-Act coolies, the North-Western Provinces coolies show the largest percentage of desertions, taking the whole Province together, though this is not the case in every district. In Cachar, for instance, the desertion-rate of non-Act North-Western Provinces coolies is very small.

Darrang, Nowgong, Sibságar, and Lakhimpur also show a much lower percentage of desertions among North-Western Provinces coolies, but Sylhet shows a higher percentage of desertions among this class.

One reason which has been offered for the comparatively high desertion-rate of Sylhet, besides the facility of desertion in that district, is that its labour force probably contains not a few runaway coolies from Cachar, who, having experienced the benefits of desertion in Cachar, are tempted to repeat the experiment in Sylhet.

SECTION IV.—MORTALITY.

13. As in last year's Report, the mortality among adults will be first considered, and the mortality among children and infants will be separately dealt with.

The total number of Act-VII. coolies who died during the year was 3,759, as compared with 5,396 deaths last year. This gives a percentage to annual strength of 7·86 in 1879, and a percentage to average strength of 10·62 in 1878. Of non-Act adults 2,936 died this year, while 2,676 died last year, giving a percentage on annual and average strength of 3·86 and 3·89, respectively. The total deaths for the Province were 6,695 this year and 8,072 last year, which give a percentage on annual and average strength of 5·03 and 6·75, respectively. There was thus a very considerable improvement in the mortality, notwithstanding that in many districts of this Province the year was exceptionally unhealthy among the native inhabitants.

The comparison is here made between percentages calculated according to the new system, or, as it is here termed, on annual strength, for the present year and on the average strength for 1878. These two percentages are not strictly comparable, but it will be found that, except where the number of persons subject to the risk of death is very much larger in one half-year than in the other half-year, the two systems of calculation do not yield very different results. It is not possible, for want of the requisite information, to calculate the percentage according to annual strength for the year 1878. In addition to the table comparing the percentage according to annual strength for 1879 with the percentage according to average strength for 1878, a table is given in which the percentages both for 1879 and 1878 are calculated on the actual strength. Comparing the percentage according to actual strength for these years, it will be found that the percentage of deaths for Act-VII. coolies for 1879 is 5·68, and for 1878, 7·23. For non-Act coolies the percentages for 1879 and 1878, are 2·69 and 2·54, respectively, while for all labourers taken together the percentages are 2·70 and 4·48. These figures also show that the mortality has much diminished, the improvement being confined to the Act-VII. coolies.

14. The following tables show the mortality among coolies from each locality, both Act-VII. and non-Act :—

Nationality.	Sex.	Number of deaths among Act-VII.		Number of deaths among non-Act.		Total deaths.		Percentage of deaths to annual strength.					
								Act-VII.		Non-Act.		Total.	
		1879.	1878.	1879.	1878.	1879.	1878.	1879.	1878.*	1879.	1878.*	1879.	1878.
Bengal	Men	401	593	452	417	853	1,010	6·75	6·92	2·63	2·71	3·66	4·46
	Women	350	690	424	368	774	1,058	5·73	7·01	2·80	2·70		
North-Western Provinces	Men	481	853	490	559	971	1,412	10·04	17·04	5·55	5·89	4·67	9·70
	Women	354	677	374	349	728	1,026	9·94	17·72	5·59	5·12		
Chota Nagpur	Men	1,125	1,203	642	517	1,767	1,810	7·50	9·67	4·36	4·18	6·04	7·37
	Women	982	1,173	533	450	1,515	1,623	8·35	11·33	4·10	4·28		
Nepal	Men	....	3	....	....	....	3	....	50·00	..	..	....	.
	Women	....	4	....	....	....	4	....	200·00	..	..		
Madras	Men	38	69	15	10	53	79	9·25	11·21	5·00	3·22	7·31	8·70
	Women	23	37	6	6	22	43	11·83	14·01	2·88	2·81		
Bombay	Men	4	3	....	....	4	3	13·33	7·69	..	..	11·90	7·54
	Women	1	1	....	....	1	1	8·33	7·14	..	..		
Total	Men	2,019	2,814	1,599	1,503	3,648	4,317	7·81	10·19	3·83	4·00	5·42	6·62
	Women	1,710	2,582	1,337	1,173	3,047	3,755	7·91	11·14	3·81	3·76	4·76	6·91
Men and Women taken together		3,759	5,396	2,936	2,676	6,695	8,072	7·86	10·62	3·86	*3·89	5·03	6·75

* The percentages of deaths for 1878 are calculated on average strength.

Nationality.	Sex.	Percentage of deaths to actual strength.					
		Act-VII.		Non-Act.		Total.	
		1879.	1878.	1879.	1878.	1879.	1878.
Bengal	Men	4·43	4·91	1·89	1·82	1·23	3·97
	Women	3·95	5·73	2·05	1·80		
North-Western Provinces	Men	6·93	10·19	3·51	3·49	3 55	5·85
	Women	7·23	11·03	3·63	3·12		
Chota-Nagpur	Men	5·62	6 58	2·99	2·83	3·02	4·98
	Women	6·40	7·79	2·92	2·85		
Nepal	Men	.....	17·64	.....	.....	.....	5·55
	Women	.....	30 76	.....	.....		
Madras	Men	6·88	8·61	3·71	2·09	3·65	6·47
	Women	9 31	11·63	2·19	2·07		
Bombay	Men	12·12	6·66	.....	.....	3·52	6·55
	Women	7·69	6·25	....	.....		
Total	Men	5·57	6·85	2·67	2·61	2·71	4·38
	Women	5·82	7·69	2·71	2·46	2·68	4·62
Men and women together		5·68	7·23	2·69	2·54	2·70	4·48

15. The second of the above tables, which gives the percentage of deaths to actual strength for both 1878 and 1879 affords a better means of comparison of the two years than the former. An examination of this table shows that there has been very considerable improvement in the mortality of Act-VII. coolies, but that the mortality has been more severe amongst non-Act coolies this year than last year. The improvement is specially marked among Act-VII. North-Western Provinces coolies, having fallen for men to 6·93 from 10·19, and for women to 7·23 from 11·03.

It will also be observed that last year the mortality was slightly more severe among women than men, but that this year the case is reversed.

16. Last year a comparison was made of the mortality in each district. This year the district order is—

	1879.	1878.	1877.
Nowgong	9·22	11·09	7·15
Darrang	8·44	9·64	8·10
Lakhimpur	5·73	7·35	6·73
Sibságar	5·38	7·72	6·90
Cachar	4·67	5·21	2·93
Kámrúp	4·15	4·79	6·20
Sylhet	3·63	5·72	3·14

For the year 1879, the percentages are calculated on the new system, or, as it is termed, on the annual strength, while for 1878 and 1877 they are calculated on the average strength.

The districts, it will thus be seen, maintain very much the same order from year to year. It is satisfactory to notice that in every district there is a considerable decrease in the mortality as compared with last year. As compared with 1877, however, the districts of Darrang, Nowgong, Sylhet, and Cachar show an increase. In all these districts the mortality among the general population was very high during the year. In Darrang and Nowgong there was severe cholera, and in Sylhet and Cachar a bad type of fever was for some time extremely prevalent. The high mortality in Nowgong is also in part attributable to the large proportion of newly-received to acclimatized coolies. Out of an average immigrant population of 3,596 adults, there were 1,487 adults imported during the year. A list has been already given, showing district by district the proportion of newly-imported coolies to total labour population, and is here repeated for convenience of comparison:—

Kámrúp	43·42
Nowgong	40·69
Darrang	25·81
Lakhimpur	17·91
Sibságar	15·03
Sylhet	9·79
Cachar	9·26

It will be seen that this corresponds generally, Kámrúp excepted, to the order of the districts in regard to their mortality.

17. Tables are given below, showing the mortality, district by district, separately for Act-VII. and non-Act coolies. It appears, speaking roughly, that the mortality among Act-VII. coolies is about twice as great in each district as among non-Act coolies:—

District.	Number of deaths among						Percentage of deaths to annual strength.					
	Act-VII.		Non-Act.		Total.		Act-VII.		Non-Act.		Total.	
	1879.	1878.	1879.	1878.	1879.	1878.	1879	1878.*	1879.	1878.*	1879.	1878.*
Sylhet	148	229	297	422	440	651	5·88	8·11	3·05	4·03	3·63	5·72
Cachar	726	1,278	1,154	975	1,880	2,253	7 14	9·43	3·86	3 28	4 67	5·21
Kámrúp	15	17	21	18	36	35	6 11	7·32	3·20	3·61	4·15	4·79
Darrang	603	643	265	179	868	822	11·22	14·10	5·31	4·51	8 44	9 64
Nowgong	236	239	102	72	338	311	10·87	16·62	6·84	5·27	9 22	11·09
Sibságar	1,059	1,702	702	691	1,761	2,393	7·29	11·17	3·85	4·38	5 38	7 72
Lakhimpur	977	1,288	395	319	1,372	1,607	7·00	9 25	3·66	3·57	5·73	7·35
Total	3,759	5,396	2,936	2,676	6,695	8,072	7·86	10·62	3·86	3·89	5·40	6·75

* The percentages of deaths for 1878 are calculated on average strength.

District	Percentage of deaths to actual strength.					
	Act-VII.		Non-Act.		Total.	
	1879.	1878.	1879.	1878.	1879.	1878.
Sylhet	4·41	5·60	2·22	3·08	1·85	3·61
Cachar	4 72	6·22	2·48	1·99	2 83	3·24
Kámrúp	4·03	5·94	2 26	2·60	2·07	3·57
Darrang	8·58	9 30	3 85	3·11	4·22	6·49
Nowgong	7·25	9 36	3·96	3·01	4·61	6·29
Sibságar	5·47	7·93	2·96	3 27	2·69	5·62
Lakhimpur	5·60	6·84	2·59	2·50	2 86	5 09
Total	5·63	7·28	2·69	2 54	2·70	4·49

From an examination of the second of these tables it will be seen that in regard to Act-VII. labourers there has been an improvement in every district, but that in regard to non-Act coolies there has been an improvement only in Sylhet, Kámrúp, and Sibságar, the remaining districts of Cachar, Darrang, Nowgong, and Lakhimpur showing a higher mortality, with the general result of showing a higher mortality among all non-Act coolies taken together.

18. The causes of death among Act-VII. and non-Act coolies in each district are shown in the tables given below:—

Causes of deaths among labourers engaged under Act-VII.

Districts.	Annual strength of labourers employed in 1879.		Deaths from				Total of columns 3, 4, 5, and 6.			Percentage of deaths.
	First half.	Second half.	Cholera.	Dysentery.	Jungle fever.	Other causes.	First half.	Second half.	Total.	
1	2		3	4	5	6	7			8
Sylhet	2,609	2,300	14	47	28	54	64	79	143	5·88
Cachar	11,201	9,573	49	272	112	293	283	413	726	7·14
Kámrúp	242	247	5	1	....	9	7	8	15	6·11
Darrang	5,183	5,468	143	167	9	284	201	402	603	11·22
Nowgong	2,057	2,302	80	27	30	99	121	115	236	10·87
Sibságar	14,907	14,183	219	365	69	406	487	572	1,059	7·29
Lakhimpur	13,195	12,041	152	254	122	449	464	513	977	7·60
Total	49,395	46,616	662	1,133	370	1,594	1,627	2,132	3,759	7·86

Causes of deaths among non-Act labourers.

District.	Annual strength of labourers employed in 1879.		Deaths from				Total of columns 3, 4, 5, and 6.			Percentage of deaths.
	First half.	Second half.	Cholera.	Dysentery.	Jungle fever.	Other causes.	First half	Second half	Total.	
1	2		3	4	5	6	7			8
Sylhet	9,175	10,134	36	74	81	106	127	170	297	3·05
Cachar	29,921	29,749	87	265	173	629	420	734	1,154	3·86
Kámrúp	681	664	2	5	7	7	5	16	21	3·26
Darrang	4,810	5,102	63	71	21	110	111	154	265	5·31
Nowgong	1,511	1,459	28	32	13	29	62	40	102	6 84
Sibságar	17,719	18,640	143	145	71	343	332	370	702	3·85
Lakhimpur	10,696	11,425	95	80	50	170	202	193	395	3·56
Total	74,415	77,174	445	672	416	1,394	1,259	1,677	2,936	3 86

Among Act-VII. coolies cholera and dysentery account for nearly half the total deaths, but among non-Act coolies these two causes of death have not been proportionately quite so fatal. Deaths from cholera were numerous in Darrang, Sibságar, and Lakhimpur; but, considered in relation to the number of people exposed to this disease, Nowgong and Darrang suffered most severely from cholera.

19. It is with great satisfaction that the Chief Commissioner is able to report so considerable an improvement in the mortality among imported labourers during the present year, and he feels little doubt that the Government of India will agree that the views he expressed in last year's Immigration Report on the subject of the exceptionally heavy mortality among Madras immigrants in 1877 and among North-Western Provinces immigrants in 1878 are borne out by the very great diminution in the mortality among these classes in the present year. Sir Steuart Bayley does not consider the Province of Assam unsuited to these classes of labourers, provided sufficient care be taken to supply them with suitable food on their first arrival in the Province, and if, as he urged in last year's Report, special care be taken not to permit emaciated coolies reduced in strength by previous scarcity in their own Province to emigrate.

Section V.—Birth-rate and General Statistics relating to Children.

Births.

20. Taking the average of the number of women in the Province at the beginning and end of each half-year, there were 56,604 women in 1879, as compared with 54,304 in 1878. The total number of births was 4,996 in 1879 and 5,506 in 1878. There were thus 510 births less than in 1878, notwithstanding that the average number of women has increased by 2,300. The percentage of births to the average number of women is this year 8·82, compared with 10·13 last year.

21. A table is given below showing district by district, and for each class of coolies separately, the average number of women, the number of births, and the percentage of the latter to the former:—

District.	Bengal.			N.-W. Provinces.			Chota Nagpur.			Nepal.			Bombay.			Madras.			Total.		
	Annual strength of women employed under Act VII. or otherwise.	Births.	Percentage.	Annual strength of women employed under Act VII. or otherwise.	Births.	Percentage.	Annual strength of women employed under Act VII. or otherwise.	Births.	Percentage.	Annual strength of women employed under Act VII. or otherwise.	Births.	Percentage.	Annual strength of women employed under Act VII. of otherwise.	Births.	Percentage.	Annual strength of women employed under Act VII. or otherwise.	Births.	Percentage.	Annual strength of women employed under Act VII. or otherwise.	Births.	Percentage.
Sylhet	2,113	157	7·43	2,152	174	8·08	1,211	11	9·24	2	1	50·00	3	..	..	82	7	8·53	5,565	451	8·10
Cachar	8,623	853	9·89	1,696	516	10·98	4,885	442	9·04	5	3	60·00	..	..	..	78	1	1·28	18,391	1,815	9·86
Kamrúp	274	20	7·29	12	..	..	144	..	..	1	..	....	..	..	..	....	..	....	433	20	4·61
Darrang	2,272	110	4·85	665	45	6·76	1,908	131	7·02	..	..	....	..	..	..	6	1	16·66	4,957	290	5·85
Nowgong	580	32	5·51	95	15	15·78	1,087	41	3·77	..	..	....	..	..	..	....	..	....	1,765	88	4·98
Sibságar	4,959	499	10·06	1,824	158	8·66	8,159	847	10·38	1	..	....	..	..	..	117	5	4·27	15,065	1,509	10·01
Lakhimpur	2,341	154	6·57	702	29	4·13	7,255	636	8·76	1	..	....	9	..	..	119	4	3·36	10,420	823	7·89
Total.....	21,162	1,825	8·62	10,146	937	9·23	24,649	2,212	8·97	10	4	40·00	12	..	..	402	18	4·47	56,604	4,996	8·82

The Chief Commissioner is unable to offer any satisfactory explanation of this variation in the birth-rate, and is inclined to doubt whether all the births have been registered.

Statistics of infants.

22. The mortality among infants was less during the present than last year, in the proportion of 6·79, calculated according to annual strength, to 8·87, calculated according to average strength. The average number of infants during 1879 was 21,445, while in 1878 it was 20,010. The number of infants who died in 1879 was 1,472, while 1,776 died in 1878. This shows a very considerable improvement.

23. A statement is here given, which shows the reported causes of deaths of infants district by district:—

Districts.	Average strength of infants in 1879.		Deaths from				Total of columns 3, 4, 5, and 6.			Percentage of deaths.
	First half.	Second half.	Cholera.	Dysentery.	Jungle fever.	Other causes.	First half.	Second half.	Total.	
1	2		3	4	5	6	7			8
Nowgong	328	365	1	2	9	43	30	25	55	15·98
Darrang	1,131	1,619	10	12	25	114	87	74	161	10·64
Sylhet	1,397	1,589	2	14	43	44	46	57	103	6·87
Sibságar	8,089	8,476	18	129	102	311	219	341	560	6·72
Kámrúp	62	87	....	2	1	2	....	....	5*	6·75
Lakhimpur	3,903	4,221	10	36	49	147	114	128	242	5·88
Cachar	5,803	5,427	10	73	81	168	213	119	332	5·86
Total	21,104	21,787	51	268	310	829	709	744	1,458	6·79

* Exclusive of deaths among infants born of the women not on contract.

As was noticed in last year's Report, a very much smaller proportion of infants die from cholera than is the case with adults, a result which is in accordance with experience elsewhere. As was the case last year, the infant mortality is extremely heavy in Nowgong and Darrang. These districts, however, in common with all other districts, show much improvement on last year.

24. Taking the deaths among all classes, infants, children, and adults, there were 9,450 deaths, while the births were only 4,997, or little more than half the number of deaths. It is clear, therefore, that the immigrant population is not in a condition of equilibrium; but, perhaps, considering the abnormal position of this population, it is not to be expected that this should be the case. But, as previously noticed, it is very doubtful if all births are registered, though, even so, it is certain that the births do not nearly equal the deaths.

25. At the end of last year there were, according to last year's returns, 21,036 infants, which include the infants on the 13 gardens in Sylhet, from which no returns have been received this year. According to this year's returns, only 20,957 infants are shown at the beginning of the year, a difference of 79. At the end of the present year 22,324 are shown

in the returns, to which we may add at least 80, to represent the children on the 13 gardens from which no returns have been received, making 22,404. As there were 21,036 at the end of last year, the increase is only 1,368.

There were, as has been said, 4,996 infants born during the year, and 1,472 died, so that, considering these two causes alone, the increase should have been 3,524. But, besides death, other causes, such as the infants growing older and becoming classed as children, and also being taken away by their parents from the garden, affect the number of losses.

26. There were 1,885 infants imported during this year, while last year 2,573 were imported. Besides importations, 7,251 were otherwise added during this year. The deductions during this year were 1,472 deaths, 206 taken away by parents who deserted, 3,371 taken away by parents who left by permission, and 2,720 who were transferred to the class of children.

Statistics of children.

27. There are still the children to consider, in which class are included all between the ages of 2 and 16. Taking the mean of the two half-years, there was an average of 39,688 children in 1879, against 33,083 in 1878. There were 1,283 deaths amongst the children, or a percentage of 3·22, calculated according to annual strength. Last year there were 1,573 deaths and a percentage of 4·75, calculated according to average strength. A table is given below, showing district by district the number of children and of deaths grouped under four heads:—

Districts.	Average strength of minors employed in 1879.		Deaths from				Total of columns 3, 4, 5, & 6.			Percentage of deaths.
	First half.	Second half.	Cholera.	Dysentery.	Jungle fever	Other causes	First half.	Second half.	Total	
1	2		3	4	5	6	7			8
Darrang	1,855	2,081	41	26	8	57	57	75	132	6·67
Nowgong	800	979	30	5	10	10	38	16	54	5·94
Kámrúp	208	301	1	2	5	8	6	10	16	5·60
Sibságar	5,292	8,910	42	108	86	141	177	200	377	4·37
Lakhimpur	5,075	6,374	20	67	74	111	104	163	267	4·29
Sylhet	2,711	3,048	7	21	25	21	43	31	74	2·53
Cachar	18,525	19,162	15	162	95	91	173	190	363	1·92
Total	38,518	40,859	146	396	303	418	598	685	1,283	3·22

The Chief Commissioner is glad to be able to report a great falling off in the percentage of mortality among children in Nowgong and Darrang. Last year, calculated on the average strength, it was 17·68 and 12·16 in these districts, respectively; this year the rate, calculated on the new system, or on the annual strength, is only 5·94 and 6·67. The district of Kámrúp alone shows an increase in the rate of mortality among children, from 3·31 to 5·60.

CHAPTER III.

DISTRICT DETAILS.

Sylhet.

At the commencement of the year there were 2,786 Act-VII. and 8,517 non-Act adults in the district, or 11,303 in all. During the year 401 Act-VII. and 834 non-Act labourers (exclusive of minors and infants) were imported. The strength at the close of the year was 2,169 Act-VII. and 10,435 non-Act labourers, or 12,604 in all, thus showing an increase of 1,301 labourers: but to this should be added the population of 13 defaulting gardens which have not submitted returns, whose importations are estimated by the Deputy-Commissioner at 1,300. Last year, 1,702 Act-VII. coolies and 1,694 non-Act coolies were imported, and the labouring force increased by 2,474 adults.

2. Considerable improvement is shown in the rate of desertions, which among the Act-VII. labourers was only 8·77, against 22·74 in 1878 and 11·66 in 1877. The rate of desertion among the non-Act coolies was 8·23, against 14·99 in 1878 and 6·47 in 1877. This improvement is particularly marked among the North-Western coolies. Last year the desertion-rate among North-Western Provinces Act-VII. men reached the very high figure of 45·05, while for women it was 18·93; the corresponding figures for this year are only 11·93 and 3·94. Similarly, the desertion-rate among non-Act coolies of this class fell from 24·17 to 12·37 for men, and from 11·44 to 7·11 for women. The desertion-rate was

high at the gardens of Adamtila and Indanagar, *viz.*, 11·2 and 8·6 per cent. for the second half year; at those of Begumkhan, Kewacherra, and Adamtila it was for the first half year 31·60, 22·60, and 8·90, respectively.

3. Altogether, 30 Act-VII. labourers were convicted for various offences: 10 were punished for rioting, 1 for theft, and 19 for desertion. There were also 19 non-Act labourers convicted of desertion under Act XIII. of 1859, and a garden Babu was fined Rs. 100 for enticing coolies from Cachar.

4. The inspection of tea-gardens was well attended to, and only two gardens employing Act-VII. labourers remained unvisited.

5. The general average death-rate among the immigrant population for the year 1879 shows a percentage of 3·7, against 5·37 and 3·15 in 1878 and 1877, respectively. The death-rate among Act-VII. coolies during the year was 5·80, compared with 8·11 for last year. The rate of mortality among the North-Western Provinces labourers, though much diminished, is still high, being 7·32 per cent. for men and 6·43 for women. The corresponding figures for 1878 were 11·79 and 7·65.

6. The unhealthy gardens of 1878 were carefully watched, and some of them were visited thrice. In one or two cases, the managers were prohibited from importing North-Western Provinces coolies, and were required to dispose of those they had already imported by transferring them to more healthy gardens. Makumcherra and Kewacherra still show high mortality, and they will be again watched during the current year. During 1879, the highest garden mortality was 5·3 per cent., in the Baramsal tea-garden. It was due to cholera, and this garden, along with the one adjoining it, suffered greatly from an outbreak of the above disease, and from violent fever, which broke out in the spring of the year, and which is attributed to the lateness of the breaking of the rains.

7. Tea cultivation is on the increase in this district, and 17 new gardens were opened during the year, against 6 in 1878 and 13 in 1877.

The total area taken up for plantations during the year was 74,843, against 54,140 acres in 1878. The outturn of tea is estimated approximately at 2,161,341 lb, against 1,366,144 lb in 1878.

Cachar.

8. The adult labour force at the commencement of the year was 41,368. During the year 3,499 coolies were imported, and the force at the close of the year was 37,766, against 41,368 in the previous year, thus showing a decrease of 3,602, or 8 per cent. This decrease is principally due to the small number of importations during the year.

The importation of adults fell from 7,304 in 1878 to 3,449 in 1879. The importation was thus less than half that of the previous year. Besides these adults, 749 children and 210 infants were imported. The proportion of men to women imported from Bengal is satisfactory, having been 252 men to 242 women, but the disproportion between the sexes among labourers imported from the North-Western Provinces is very great: only 491 women were imported, against 1,067 men.

9. An analysis of the labour force in Cachar at the beginning and end of the last three years shows that there has been a steady diminution of the number of Act-VII. coolies. The number of non-Act coolies increased during 1877 by some 2,000 adults, but has been decreasing, though slowly, ever since. Thus, there were at the end of 1877, 1878, and 1879, respectively, 13,888, 12,128, and 8,871 Act-VII. coolies, and of non-Act adults at the same periods 29,861, 29,240, and 28,895, respectively. At the beginning of 1877, there were only 27,357 non-Act adults, so that in that year the non-Act adult labour force was increased by 2,504. It is satisfactory to notice that, though the adult non-Act coolies have been diminishing, the number of children shows a continued and steady increase, being at the end of the years 1876 to 1879, 10,259, 14,390, 17,915, and 19,190, respectively. There is no doubt that the labour of these children to a great extent makes good the falling off of the adult labour force. Moreover, since it shows the gradual growth of a future labouring population, this steady increase in the number of children is a healthy sign. Still, the fact remains that the total immigrant population labouring on tea-gardens, including children and infants, is less than it was last year by 3,078 persons. Omitting all consideration of infants, the adult force was reduced by 3,602, *viz.*, 3,257 Act-VII. and 345 non-Act coolies, and the number of children increased by 1,275 only.

10. The number of desertions shows a decrease by 775. The total number of desertions among adults was 2,779, against 3,554 in 1878. The desertions among Act-VII. coolies were 1,277, or 12·13 per cent., against 13·83 per cent. in the previous year, and among non-Act labourers 1,502, or 5·03 per cent., against 5·66 per cent. in 1878.

The North-Western Provinces coolies still show extremely high rates of desertions: among Act-VII. men of this class the rate was as high as 44·8 last year, while the corresponding percentage for this year is 26·33. This is a considerable falling off, but is still enormously high.

11. The total number of deaths decreased by 373. The deaths among adults were 1,880, against 2,253 in 1878. The mortality among Act-VII. coolies was 726, or 7·14 per cent., against 9·43 per cent. in the previous year, and among non-Act coolies 1,154, or 3·86 per cent., against 3·28 per cent. in the previous year. The mortality among the Madras coolies is very high, being 21·92 per cent., against 1·16 per cent. in the previous year, but no general inference regarding the health of these coolies can be drawn from these figures, as the percentage is calculated only upon a very small number, *viz.*, 48 persons.

A decided improvement appears in regard to the North-Western Provinces coolies. The death-rate last year among Act-VII. coolies of this class was 20·24 per cent. for men and 19·01 for women; but during the year under report it is only 9·89 per cent. for men and 9·87 per cent. for women. This is doubtless due to the discontinuance of the importations of weakly labourers which took place to such an extent in 1877-78. Only 1,422 persons from the North-Western Provinces were imported this year, against 2,860 imported in 1878, and, from the comparative infrequency of complaints of their arrival in emaciated condition, the Chief Commissioner concludes that the health of those who were imported has much improved.

12. There were altogether 17,766 women at the close of the year, and 1,815 births were registered. In the previous year there were 18,869 women and 2,229 births. This gives a birth-rate of 9·90 per cent., against 11·06 in 1878.

13. The duty of inspection was fairly well performed.

14. The Goomra, Jelalpur, and Goabari tea-gardens, which previously showed notably high rates of mortality, have greatly improved, owing to more careful selection of the coolies imported. There have been frequent inspections of these gardens.

The condition of Ataicherra also has much improved. It has been closed to the importation of unacclimatized North-Western Provinces coolies.

Besides Ataicherra, committees were held during the year 1879 on Doyapur, Kumbirgram, and Scottpur gardens, and, according to their recommendation the importation of North-Western Provinces coolies was prohibited with respect to these gardens. The result of these measures is still to be seen. The thirty bad gardens referred to last year also all show much improvement.

15. During the year under report the following gardens show high rates of mortality :—

Telka.—The mortality during 1879 was 13·27 per cent. among Act-VII. coolies, and 13·52 per cent. among dependents and free labourers. This garden was twice visited during the year, and the inspecting officers were of opinion that impure water was the main cause of the mortality. The wells on the garden have since been protected from surface drainage. This garden will continue to be watched.

16. *Dulargram.*—This garden is situated in the neighbourhood of Ataicherra and Doyapur. During the year, 69 coolies died on the garden, giving a death-rate of 10·30 per cent.: 12 of these deaths were from dysentery, and the rest from diarrhœa and fever. A considerable number of coolies were imported from Chota Nagpur, the North-Western Provinces, Oudh, and Behar, during 1878 and 1879, and the deaths were mostly among the new importations. This garden was twice inspected during 1879, and is now subjected to medical inspection under Section 119 of Act VII. (B.C.) of 1873.

17. *Tikalpar* is a comparatively new garden, and its labour force is mostly made up of new importations. During the year, 54 Act coolies died,—3 from cholera, 20 from dysentery, and the rest from other causes. The death-rate among the Chota Nagpur coolies was 17·47 per cent. A committee was held on this garden, which attributed the mortality to bad selection of coolies and to the impure water used by them. The findings of the committee have been communicated to the proprietors, with the warning that, unless the improvements they have suggested are carried out, the importation of coolies will be prohibited.

The mortality among the Act-VII. coolies at Jhirighat and Alni is also high. These gardens will be watched.

18. There were, as usual, few criminal offences committed by labourers. Only 106 coolies, or 0·27 per cent. of the imported adult labourers, were convicted during the year.

19. The settlement of time-expired coolies in this district is increasing every year. This year about 1,033 acres of land were taken up by these men exclusively, at a rent of

Rs. 752-13-0 a year, and, besides this, several plots were taken by them conjointly with natives of the district.

The outturn of tea is reported at 9,146,989 lb, which is an increase of upwards of 1,800,000 lb over the outturn of the previous year. During the year, 8 new gardens were opened, against 2 in 1878. These facts show that the tea industry in Cachar continues to extend.

KÁMRÚP.

20. In this district the total labour population shows an increase of 319, or 33 per cent. Act-VII. labourers show an increase of 11, but non-Act coolies have increased by 308 men. There were, including children and infants, 958 persons at the beginning and 1,277 at the end of the year employed on tea gardens in the district.

21. Importations increased by 419 persons. During the year 620 coolies were imported, against 201 in 1878. No coolies were sent up by contractors, but garden-sirdars brought up 134 agreement coolies, against 53 in 1878. The remaining 486 were free immigrants. These coolies were imported only from Bengal and Chota Nagpur: none came from the North-Western Provinces.

22. There were only 3 desertions during the year, against 57 in 1878. This is highly satisfactory. The mortality shows a slight increase, there being 71 deaths, or 5·31 per cent., against 35, or 4·79 per cent., in 1878. The death-rate among Act-VII. coolies was 5·34, against 7·32 in 1878, and among non-Act coolies 5·30 per cent., against 3·61 in 1878.

23. Of the bad gardens of 1878, Kurkuria shows much improvement. Bordooar is well looked after by the resident manager. A large number of non-Act labourers joined this garden in August, and fever and dysentery amongst them swelled the death-rate to 5·5 per cent. during the second half of the year. The death-rate in Luri is also high, being 7 per cent., and is attributed to fever. Both these gardens will be watched.

24. About 656 coolies, who marched up by the land route, were inspected at the head-quarters of this district. There were no epidemics among any of the batches.

The inspection of tea-gardens was well performed. There were four new gardens opened during the year.

DARRANG.

25. The total adult population at the end of the year was 10,260, of whom 5,226 were Act-VII., and 5,034 non-Act, coolies. In 1878 the strength at the close of the year was 9,105, of whom 4,656 were Act-VII. and 4,449 non-Act coolies. Thus the adult population increased by 1,155, or 12 per cent. The importations were 2,649, against 2,988 in 1878.

26. The total importation of adults decreased by 339, or 11 per cent. There were new gardens opened during the year, thus bringing the total number of gardens at present opened to 123.

27. Among Act-VII. labourers, 259 deserted this year, against 228, and the desertion-rate was 4·86, against 5·00 per cent. in 1878. 163 non-Act labourers also deserted, giving a desertion-rate of 3·28 per cent.

28. The mortality among Act-VII. coolies, though high, is less than in the previous year. There were 603 deaths, against 643 in 1878, and the death-rate was 11·22, against 14·10 per cent. last year. The death-rate was specially high among North-Western Provinces and Chota Nagpur coolies. The mortality among the males of the above classes was 17·22 and 13·73, against 24·34 per cent. and 14·74 per cent. in 1878, and among the females 16·29 per cent. and 14·69 per cent., against 29·41 and 16·98 in 1878.

The mortality among non-Act coolies was 265, against 179, and the death-rate was 5·31, against 4·51 in 1878.

Although the death-rate among North-Western Provinces coolies is still lamentably high, it shows a marked decrease upon that of last year. The year was a very unhealthy one, and cholera was epidemic in the district.

The mortality among minors and infants also shows a decrease, the death-rate being 6·66 and 10·63, against 12·16 and 13·15 per cent. in 1878.

29. The gardens which exhibited a high mortality in 1877 are steadily improving. The gardens on which the death-rate was exceptionally high during 1878 were :—

Barkola.—The mortality fell from 21·73 and 14·86 per cent. in the two half years of 1878 to 3·37 and 1·83 in the two half years of 1879, respectively. The high mortality during 1878 was attributed to the unhealthiness of the sites on which the lines were built. Immediately after the inspection of the garden on the 20th December, 1878, the lines were

removed to a better site, and since then the mortality has greatly decreased, and, notwithstanding the prevalence of cholera in the neighbouring villages and gardens, there was only one death from that disease on this garden.

30. *Gellahating.*—The mortality on this garden decreased from 14·42 in the second half of 1878 to 5·8 and 9·43 in the two half years of 1879. This garden will continue to be watched.

31. *Shadharughop.*—This garden was visited by the Inspector, in company with the Civil Surgeon, on the 18th December, 1879. The majority of the coolies were very healthy, but a few, chiefly new importations, were still suffering from disease contracted during the rains. The condition of the garden was good, but the lines appeared to be unsheltered. This garden is almost invariably unhealthy during the rains, and the Inspector intends to visit it again during that season.

32. *Rontholi.*—The mortality on this garden during the second half of 1879 was 7·62. This garden was visited thrice, and on the 10th November 1879 was inspected by the Civil Surgeon. The old lines were condemned as low and damp, and the manager was requested to remove the lines to a new site, which is high, dry, almost surrounded by cultivation, and fairly well sheltered. It was also directed that the lines should be supplied with water from a large tank. The manager was in the habit of sending the sick to the sadar station, a distance of 14 miles, and he has now been directed to erect a hospital and to provide a Native Doctor. This garden will continue to be watched.

33. *Partabgurh.*—The mortality during the second half of the year was 10·09. The Civil Surgeon inspected the garden on the 18th December 1879, and suggested that a resident European Manager of experience and a well-qualified Native Doctor should be maintained. There is now a European resident manager on the estate, and the general manager has been asked to report if he has secured a competent medical officer.

34. The following gardens show an exceptionally high rate of mortality and desertion the year 1879:—

	Mortality.			Desertions.		
	1878.	1879.		1878.	1879.	
	Second half.	First half.	Second half.	Second half.	First half.	Second half.
Bongong	6·94	20 96	10·90	8·33	22 58	.....
Sadharu	7·94	15·35	11·55	1·40	3 31	2·16
Panbari	12·31	16·15	9 16	2·17	0·76	2·29
Atharikhat	8·15	3·86	13 99	.....	.....	6 17
Bahjura	6·74	6·72	11·42	.....	4·2	1·42

35. *Bongong.*—This garden employs but a small number of Act-VII. labourers. There were 13 deaths from cholera alone, which accounts for the high rate of mortality. The desertions were chiefly amongst non-Act coolies. The arrangements on the garden are reported to be in every way satisfactory, and there is a European Assistant in charge.

36. *Sadharu.*—The mortality on this garden was very high. There were 29 deaths from cholera alone. When the garden was visited, on the 20th May 1879, the outbreak was attributed to the long drought, and the consequent low state of the stream which runs alongside of the lines.

37. *Pánbári.*—This garden was inspected by the Deputy-Commissioner on the 5th June 1879. The death-rate during the second half of 1878 was 12 31 per cent., and during the first half of 1879 16·15 per cent. Altogether there were (exclusive of infants) 17 deaths. 13 of these occurred from cholera, which broke out in the garden on the 10th April. During this month cholera prevailed in almost every mauza in the sub-division, and those in the vicinity of this garden suffered severely. During the outbreak in the garden a good Native Doctor was present, and the European Medical Officer of the Company went and resided at Pánbári, so that everything possible was done. Omitting the 13 deaths from cholera, there were only 4 deaths from other causes.

The Civil Surgeon, Dr. Warburton, inspected the Pánbári garden on the 11th November, and he thinks that the high mortality on this garden is attributable to (1) a bad water-supply, (2) proximity of jungle, and (3) the exposed position of the lines. The manager, who was present at the time of the inspection, has promised to remedy these evils by making a pucca well, by cutting down the jungle, and by planting a belt of trees, to prevent the lines from being exposed. The lines have since been removed to another site.

38. *Atharikhat.*—The mortality on this garden during the second half of the year was very high, but 7 of the deaths are due to cholera alone. It is usually a healthy garden, and all the arrangements on it are reported as being satisfactory in every way.

39. *Balijuri.*—This garden employs but a small number of Act-VII. labourers, but the death-rate in both the half-years was heavy. In the first half-year there were five deaths from cholera, and in the second half seven from the same cause.

On Ketella garden, the water-supply having been declared bad, two good wells were sunk for the benefit of the labourers. Generally, increased attention has been paid by the managers of gardens to the matter of procuring pure supplies of water for labourers.

40. The number of immigrant labourers who have settled down to ordinary cultivation on their own account is stated to be 1,395, cultivating an area of 756 acres, of which 252 acres were taken up during the present year. There were 7 new gardens opened during the year.

NOWGONG.

41. The proportion of sirdari to contractors' coolies imported shows a steady increase. Last year 59 per cent. of the importations consisted of this class, whereas this year it was as high as 80 per cent. Including both Act and non-Act labourers, altogether 1,487 adults were imported during the year, against 1,634 in the previous year, which gives a falling off of 9·88 per cent. The localities from which the majority of the coolies were imported were Chota Nagpur and Sonthalia.

42. The total immigrant labour force was 3,268 at the beginning of the year and 3,654 at its close, showing an increase of 11 per cent. In 1878 the force at the commencement was 2,211, and at the end 3,268. Out of an average adult population of 3,596, 338 persons died, giving a death-rate of 9·39, against 11·09 per cent. in the previous year. The death-date is still high, and is highest among the Chota Nagpur coolies.

The mortality amongst Act-VII. coolies was 11·6, against 16·6 per cent. last year, and among non-Act 6·96, against 5·27 in the previous year. Out of an average number of 341 infants, 55 died, giving a death-rate of 16·12 per cent. There can be little doubt that these high death-rates are due to the large proportion of newly-arrived immigrants to the total immigrant population. Out of an average immigrant population of 3,596 adults, there were 1,487 adults imported during the year.

43. 392 persons deserted, against 201 in the previous year, thus increasing the desertion-rate from 7·17 to 10·90 per cent. This high rate of desertion is due to the large bonuses offered to the coolies, and the liberal rewards given to those who can procure them.

44. The amount of land taken up by coolies this year was 30·34, against 3 acres in 1878. Local labour is largely employed, and out of 131 gardens only 30 employed contract coolies.

45. The duty of inspection was well performed, so far as gardens employing Act-VII. labourers are concerned. All these gardens were visited except two, which were newly opened.

46. The unhealthy gardens of 1878, by careful watching and repeated inspections, have greatly improved, and the mortality this year in these gardens is very trifling. In the Kulikushi garden the coolie-lines were out of repair. They were repaired during the year, and are now in good order.

47. This year the following gardens show a high rate of mortality, and they will be carefully watched:—

	First half.	Second half.
Borghat	.....	16·52
Sagmathi	9·00	10·96
Sagunbari	6·52	7·20

The high death-rate in Borghat tea-garden is said to be due to a bad batch of coolies having been sent up to this garden. The mortality in Sagmathi is owing to an outbreak of cholera. The average number of coolies employed on Sagunbari tea-garden is very low, and the high death-rate in this garden is due to cholera and to the accidental deaths of two women in childbirth. These gardens are to be watched.

SIBSÁGAR.

48. The strength of Act-VII. coolies at the beginning of the year was 15,030; 4,251 labourers were imported, and the force at the end of the year was 13,583. There was thus a decrease of 1,447, or 9 per cent., in the total force of labourers under the Act The population not under the Act was, however, increased by 1,842 persons. The net result, therefore, was an increase of 395 labourers.

49. The importation of Act-VII. coolies fell from 7,699 in 1878 to 4,251 during this year, showing a decrease of 3,448, or 44 per cent. The proportion of sirdari coolies was this year 68 per cent., while last year it was 72 per cent.

Of the total number of 4,251 importations under the Act, Chota Nagpur supplied 2,908, Bengal 716, North-Western Provinces 611, and Madras only 16 labourers.

50. The death-rate among the immigrants in this district shows much improvement. The mortality among Act-VII. coolies was for men 16·64 in 1878, but 7·67 in 1879, and among women 10·72 in 1878, but 6·89 in 1879.

Among non-Act adult labourers, also, the death-rate has diminished from 4·38 to 3·90 among children from 7·36 to 4·41, and among infants from 16·30 to 9·74.

51. There was a slight falling off in the reported birth-rate during the year, which was 10 per cent. on the average strength of women, against 11 per cent. in 1878.

52. The desertion-rate scarcely shows any variation from last year, being 3·55 per cent., against 3·51 in 1878.

53. Of the bad gardens in 1878, Laojan and Dhansiri, though much improved, still show high rates of mortality. In Laojan the rate of mortality fell from 20·74 per cent. in the second half of 1878 to 9·77 and 8·41 per cent. during the first and second halves of 1879. These gardens will continue to be watched.

54. The following gardens show high rates of mortality during the present year:—

	First half.	Second half.
Mowkuttie	16·52	0·68
Konnah	12·00	*Nil.*
Balaguri	6·89	11·11
Teok	2·17	10·11

The high mortality in the Mowkuttie garden was due to the outbreak of cholera, which caused the death of 23 coolies out of a total number of 200 labourers.

The death-rate in the Konnah tea-garden is high, but the percentage has been calculated on a small average number.

The deaths in the Balajuri and Teok gardens have been attributed to the importation of bad batches of coolies. These gardens will be carefully watched during the present year.

55. The settlement as cultivators of time-expired coolies is increasing; about 832 acres of land were taken up by them for ordinary cultivation, against 519 acres in 1878. Of the above 832 acres, 378 acres were taken up in the sadar sub-division, 294 acres in Jorhát, and 160 acres in Golághát.

56. The duty of inspection was fairly well performed. The tea industry is increasing every year in this district, and as many as 17 gardens were opened during the present year.

Lakhimpur.

57. The total force of Act-VII. coolies at the commencement of the year was 13,304; 4,009 coolies were imported, and the strength at the end of the year was 11,996, thus showing a decrease of 1,308, or 9 per cent., in the total strength of Act-VII. coolies. In 1878, there was an increase of 1,710 Act-VII. coolies. But, while the number of Act-VII. coolies diminished in 1879, the number of non-Act coolies was increased by 1,457, and the net result was an increase of 149 adult labourers.

58. The importations under the Act fell from 7,106 in 1878 to 4,009 in 1879, showing a decrease of 3,097, or 43 per cent.

The proportion of sirdari coolies imported was 71 per cent. in the present, as against 68 per cent. in the previous year. The largest number of labourers were recruited in Chota Nagpur, *viz.*, 3,357, or 83 per cent. of the total imports.

59. The mortality among the labourers has much improved. In the case of Act-VII. coolies the rate has fallen from 9·95 in 1878 to 7·63 in 1879. For non-Act adult coolies it is nearly the same in both years, *viz.*, 3·46 in 1878 and 3·60 in 1879, but for children it has fallen from 7·54 to 4·37, and for infants from 12·28 to 8·92. Both in Sibságar and Lakhimpur the fall in the rate of mortality is particularly marked among the North-Western Provinces coolies.

60. There has been little change in the reported birth-rate, which is said to be 8·0 per cent. to the average strength of women, and was last year 8·85. Considerable improvement is shown in the desertion-rate. Last year 502 coolies deserted, giving a rate of 3·95 per cent., while this year only 383 deserted, or 2·99 per cent.

61. Among the bad gardens of 1878, Chubwa shows much improvement; wells have been constructed of earthen drain-pipes, and a good water-supply thus secured. During the year, out of an average number of 464 coolies, only 16 died, giving a death-rate of 3·44 per cent.

The Hilladhari tea-garden also shows improvement; the death-rate during the second half of 1879 was 7·54 per cent. The water-supply of this garden has likewise been much improved by the sinking of wells constructed of earthenware pipes. This garden will continue to be watched.

The mortality in the Kahing garden has been attributed to the import of a bad batch of coolies, almost all of whom died or deserted. The mortality was 11·45 and 7·53 during the two half years of 1879. This garden is to be watched carefully.

The mortality in the Timonah garden was also high, being 9·56 during the second half of 1879. This garden also will be watched during the present year.

62. The gardens which exhibit high rates of mortality during the present year are—

	First half.	Second half.
Seelonee	6·45	39·21
Chinnatoolia	16·60	1·29
Sherewood	6·55	10·66
Chawalkhowa	2·58	10·34

The exceedingly high mortality in the Seelonee garden has been attributed to the receipt of a bad batch of North-Western Provinces coolies. The proprietors intend not to import this class of coolies any more, and their sirdars have been directed to recruit coolies only from Chota Nagpur. This garden will be watched.

The Chinnatoolia tea-garden was attacked by an epidemic of cholera, which accounts for the high mortality during the first half of 1879.

The high-death rates in Sherewood and Chawalkhowa have been attributed to bad batches of coolies sent to these gardens. These gardens will, however, be watched.

63. The inspections of tea-gardens would have been more adequately performed but for the withdrawal of the Assistant-Inspector from Lakhimpur for service at Golághát, a measure rendered necessary by the draft of civil officers for work in connection with the military expedition into the Nága Hills.

64. The tea industry of this district is progressing favourably, 16 new gardens having been opened during the year under review.

CHAPTER IV.

GENERAL REMARKS.

Accommodation and treatment.

THERE is nothing to add on the subject of the accommodation and treatment of labourers employed on tea-gardens to the remarks made in last year's Report. The Reports of the Inspectors continue to be as favourable as formerly, and a uniform readiness is shown by employers in carrying out suggestions for improvements. There are no special cases of ill-treatment of labourers by employers to be reported this year.

Sanitary improvements.

2. The reports received from Inspectors do not show any very considerable introduction of sanitary improvements, but there are clear indications that the circulation of Dr. DeRenzy's remarks has not been altogether without effect in attracting special attention to the subject of water-supply. Here and there improved wells have been made by using large glazed drain-pipes to form the shaft. In some cases also Norton's tube-wells and pumps have been introduced with good results. On one or two gardens the coolie-lines have been re-built on more suitable sites. As was promised in paragraph 7, page 28 of last year's Immigration Report, the views of the Sanitary Commissioner expressed in his Sanitary Report for Assam for 1878 on the subject of the supply of suitable food to coolies, as well as on the improvement of the water-supply, were brought to the notice of a large number of tea-planters, and the matter is again treated at some length in this year's Report. The Inspectors of Labourers are already fully aware of the importance which the Chief Commissioner attaches to these subjects.

3. At the suggestion of Sir Steuart Bayley, the Inspector of Immigrants in Upper Assam endeavoured to collect from the independent European Medical Officers in charge of tea-gardens an expression of their views as to the principal conditions which were detrimental to the health of the labourers resident on gardens, and the best remedies for them. But the Inspector reports that, with one or two exceptions, he has received no replies to

his inquiries as to the measures which the experience of these gentlemen would lead them to suggest for the maintenance and improvement of the health of garden labourers. The Chief Commissioner much regrets that this should have been the case, as it is only by collecting opinions from every possible source, and by giving to all the results of the experience of each, that systematic improvement in dietary and sanitary matters can be hoped for.

The Chief Commissioner is more than ever convinced that the unhealthiness of unacclimatised coolies is caused, especially in the case of those from the North-Western Provinces and Behar, by the unsuitable diet to which they are subjected, and he fully believes that by placing barley, peas, millets, or Indian-corn within the reach of newly-imported coolies in the first year or two of their contract, the planters would find the available working power of this class increased out of all proportion to the increase in cost which such a measure involves. If a few planters would try the experiment, their example would soon be followed. But the law assumes all coolies to be rice-eaters, and it is difficult to eradicate the prejudice.

The Inspector of Immigrants, Upper Assam, also points out the inaccuracy of the statements of the causes of deaths of coolies, where they are not directly certified by a qualified Medical Officer, a condition which in many instances cannot be observed. This should be borne in mind when considering the statements given at page 14, which show the causes of death.

Average wage and wage test.

4. A very important point, to which the attention of inspecting officers has been specially directed, is that of the wages received by labourers. In the reports of inspections the average wage on the garden under inspection is shown. It has been pointed out that this is hardly sufficient, as the average wage on any garden rarely differs very much from that on neighbouring gardens. The attention of Inspectors has therefore been called to the importance of ascertaining particularly that the earnings of newly-arrived and sickly coolies are sufficient to support them. The earnings of labourers vary somewhat according to the season of the year. Thus, in the leaf-plucking season women are often able to earn two or even three times their contract wages, and men are often able to earn as much at hoeing. But such large earnings are exceptional, and it is rarely possible for a coolie to continue to earn them throughout the year. On the other hand, some labourers never earn their full contract wage, as it is almost an invariable custom when a labourer does not perform the full task laid down in the garden schedule, which is framed under Section 106 of Act VII. (B.C.) of 1873, to make a corresponding deduction from his wages. Any amendment of the law will have to deal with this question.

Offences of labourers.

5. Only 360 labourers on contract under Act VII. of 1873 (B.C.) are shown by the returns received to have been imprisoned for offences. A statement is given below, showing district by district the imprisonments and the offences for which they were awarded.

Return of imprisonments of Imported Labourers on contracts under Act VII. (B.C.) of 1873.

Districts.	Desertions.	Breach of contract.	Rioting.	Theft.	Assault.	Culpable homicide.	Counterfeiting coin.	House trespass.	Other offences.	Total.
Sylhet	38	.....	10	1	...	.....	.....	.....	.....	49*
Cachar	57	.....	5	5	4	.....	.....	2	33	106
Kámrúp	3	.....	...	...	...	.....	.....	.....	.....	3
Darrang	18	.....	...	4	...	.....	.....	.....	.....	22
Nowgong	38	30	..	...	...	.....	.....	.....	22	90
Sibságar	29	.....	3	3	2	.....	.....	.....	2	39
Lakhimpur	45	.....	...	1	...	1	4	.....	.....	51
Total	228	30	18	14	6	1	4	2	57	360

* A garden Babu was fined Rs. 100 for enticing coolies from Cachar.

It will be seen that the heinous offences were very few, and that the principal offence committed was desertion.

Settlement within the Province.

6. The reports of District Officers show that during the past year 2,457 acres in all were taken up by time-expired labourers within this Province. This is exclusive of the district of Sylhet, from which it is not possible to obtain any information on this subject. The information received from Lakhimpur appears also to be wanting in exactness, and is merely an estimate. No information has been received on this subject from Kámrúp; but it is improbable that much, if any, land has been taken up by time-expired labourers in this district, where the immigrant population is small.

Rice cultivation for the benefit of the imported population.

7. It has been suggested to the Chief Commissioner that it might be possible to reduce the price of rice, by endeavouring to induce immigrants to settle within the Province and cultivate that staple, and so benefit the employer of imported labour, who, when the price of rice rises above the contract rate of Rs. 3 a maund, at which he is bound on demand to supply it to his labourers, is often a considerable loser.

It seemed clear, however, to the Chief Commissioner that any attempt on the part of Government to induce immigrants to settle as ordinary cultivators would involve entering into competition with private recruiters in the recruiting districts, and with employers of labour in this Province. The result would be that, even if Government succeeded at considerable expense in securing a few settlers, the price of rice would not be sensibly diminished, while the competition by Government for labour would probably lead to a very considerable increase in its price to the tea-planter, who would thus be worse off than he was before.

Diminution of importations from North-Western Provinces.

8. It has already been noticed in paragraph 1, Chapter II. of this Report, that there has been a very considerable diminution in the importation of labourers from the North-Western Provinces. In consequence of the severe mortality which occurred among North-Western Provinces coolies last year, heavy losses have been incurred by employers, who have therefore been chary of engaging these labourers. It is clear, however, that the sparsely-populated districts of Chota Nagpur and Sonthalia cannot long continue to supply emigrants in sufficient number to meet the demand for labour which has grown up of recent years. If the tea interest continues to develop at its present rate, a time will come when the vastly over-populated tracts of the Behar and Benares Divisions will form the main recruiting-ground of Assam. It is therefore of considerable importance that the attention of employers should be directed to adapting the conditions of life on a garden to the requirements of this class. As has been shown, the mortality among North-Western Provinces labourers has very much diminished during the present year, and it is the Chief Commissioner's conviction that, by careful attention to diet in the first year or two of their contract, this class of coolies, who are certainly not less intelligent than the "junglies" of Sonthalia and Chota Nagpur, might equally retain their health; and if a sound system of recruiting could be established in those districts, the results would be beneficial to both parties.

Amendment of the Emigration Act, VII. of 1873 (B.C.)

9. The question of the amendment of Act VII. of 1873 (B.C.) is under consideration, and the opinions of local officers and tea-planters have been called for. Act XIII. of 1859, which has been extended to Assam, has also an important bearing on the relations between employers and labourers. It was certainly not framed with a view to the objects for which it is now employed, and is partially inapplicable to the case of labour on tea-gardens. Its revision can conveniently be considered when the revision of Act VII. of 1873 (B.C.) is taken up.

10. Conclusion.—Although importations of labour have very considerably diminished during the year under review, and the prices of tea have not been high, still the Chief Commissioner trusts that these ominous signs will pass away without leading to any permanent contraction of the operations of the tea industry It is, however, not at all probable that extensions of tea cultivation will continue at the rapid rate of the last few years. The most important measure which Government can adopt in furtherance of this interest, as well as for the development of this Province, is the improvement of communications. Something has been done in this respect : the passenger service from Kaunia to Dhubri has been placed on a satisfactory footing, and the Chief Commissioner is hepoful that a quick passenger service may be extended from Dhubri to Gauháti, perhaps during the present year. The demands of the Surmá Valley in this matter also require attention, though at present the Chief Commissioner does not see his way to incurring any expenditure for this purpose.

The relations between District Officers and tea-planters have, on the whole, been satisfactory during the year under report.

RETURNS.

Return showing the Statistics for the Total Immigrant Population of the Province of Assam during the year 1879.

1		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Classes of Labourers.		Number remaining at the end of last year, 1878.	Additions made during the year 1879.				Total of columns 3 and 7.	Deductions made during the year 1879.				Number remaining at the end of the year 1879.	Strength on the 1st July, 1879.	Percentage of deaths to		Percentages of desertions to		Annual strength	
			Imported.	Received from other gardens.	Otherwise added.	Total added.		Died.		Deserted.		Otherwise deducted.	Total deducted.	Actual strength (less received from other gardens).	Annual strength.	Actual strength (less received from other gardens).	Annual strength.	Actual strength (less received from other gardens).	First half.	Second half.
								First half.	Second half.	First half.	Second half.									
Sylhet	Act-VII. labourers (adults)	2,786	401	21	50	472	3,258	64	79	92	124	730	1,089	2,169	2,432	4·41	5·88	6·67	8·91	3,237	2,609	2,300
	Non-Act labourers — Adults	8,517*	834	1,681	3,965	6 500	15,017	127	170	435	357	3,495	4,582	10,435	9,834	2 22	3·05	5·92	8·23	13,336	9,175	10,134
	Non-Act labourers — Children	2,512*	263	308	895	1,466	3,978	43	31	88	42	629	833	3,145	2,951	2·01	2·58	3·54	4·59	3,670	2,731	3,048
	Non-Act labourers — Infants	1,284*	121	129	734	984	2,268	46	57	45	21	431	600	1,668	1,511	4·81	6·87	3·08	4·54	2,139	1,397	1,589
	Total	15,099*	1,619	2,139	5,664	9,422	24,521	280	337	658	544	5,285	7,104	17,417	16,728	2·75	3 72	5 37	7·31	22,382	15,913	17,072
Cachar	Act-VII. labourers (adults)	12,128	3,077	193	161	3,431	15,559	283	443	792	485	4,685	6,688	8,871	10,275	4·72	7·14	8·31	13·13	15,366	11,201	9,573
	Non-Act labourers — Adults	29,240	422	1,905	16,775	19,102	48,342	420	734	761	741	16,791	19,447	28,895	30,603	2·48	3·86	3·23	5·03	46,437	29,921	29,649
	Non-Act labourers — Children	17,915	749	197	5,152	6,098	24,013	173	190	234	141	4,085	4,823	19,190	19,135	1·52	1·92	1 57	1·99	23,816	18,525	19,162
	Non-Act labourers — Infants	6.342	210	55	2,981	3,246	9,588	213	119	61	53	3,551	3,997	5,591	5,264	3·48	5·86	1·19	2·02	9,533	5,803	5,427
	Total	65,625	4,458	2,350	25,069	31,877	97,502	1,089	1,486	1,848	1,420	29,112	34,955	62,547	65,277	2·70	3·96	3 43	5·04	95,152	65,451	63,912
Kamrúp	Act-VII. labourers (adults)	234	134	1	4	139	373	7	8	....	1	112	128	245	250	4·03	6·11	0·26	0·40	372	242	247
	Non Act labourers — Adults	472	249	16	205	470	942	5	16	2	....	282	305	687	691	2·26	3·26	0·21	0·34	926	581	664
	Non Act labourers — Children	203	176	2	14	192	395	6	10	....	....	84	100	295	313	4·07	5·60	.....	.....	393	258	304
	Non Act labourers — Infants	49	61	....	20	81	130	7	12	....	....	11	30	100	75	14·61	25·08	.....	.....	130	62	87
	Total	958	620	19	243	882	1,840	25	46	2	1	489	563	1,277	1,329	3·89	5·71	0·16	0 24	1,821	1,143	1,303
Darrang	Act-VII. labourers (adults)	4,636	2,358	154	48	2,560	7,216	201	402	127	132	1,128	1,990	5,226	5,711	8·53	11·22	3·66	4·86	7,062	5,183	5,468
	Non Act labourers — Adults	4,449	291	255	2,139	2,685	7,134	111	154	80	83	1,672	2,100	5,034	5,171	3·85	5·31	2·36	3·28	6,879	4,810	5,102
	Non Act labourers — Children	1,615	542	48	353	943	2,558	57	75	14	6	339	491	2,067	2,096	5·25	6 67	0·79	1·02	2,510	1,855	2,081
	Non Act labourers — Infants	1,279	302	32	418	752	2,031	87	74	3	....	212	376	1,655	1,584	8·05	10·64	0·15	0·20	1.999	1,431	1,619
	Total	11,999	3,493	489	2,958	6,940	18,939	456	705	224	221	3,351	4,957	13.982	14,562	6·29	8·36	2·41	3·22	18.450	13.280	14,272
Nowgong	Act-VII. labourers (adults)	1,792	1,389	22	79	1 490	3,282	121	115	158	178	428	1,000	2,282	2,323	7·23	10 87	10·30	15·41	3,260	2,057	2,302
	Non-Act labourers — Adults	1,476	98	17	996	1,111	2,587	62	40	34	22	1,057	1,215	1,372	1,546	3 96	6·84	2·17	3 75	2,570	1,511	1,459
	Non-Act labourers — Children	780	410	15	125	550	1,330	38	16	21	3	275	353	977	981	4 10	5·94	1 82	2·67	1,315	880	979
	Non-Act labourers — Infants	292	171	....	88	259	551	30	25	....	....	129	184	367	364	9 98	15·98	.....	.....	551	328	365
	Total	4,340	2,068	54	1,288	3,410	7,750	251	196	213	203	1,889	2,752	4,998	5,214	5·80	9 08	5·40	8·42	7,696	4,777	5,106
Sibsagar	Act-VII labourers (adults)	15,030	4,351	599	63	4,913	19,943	487	572	285	229	4,787	6,360	13,583	13,784	5·47	7·29	2·65	2·85	19,344	14 907	14,183
	Non Act labourers — Adults	16 715	582	987	6 361	7,930	24,645	332	370	197	141	5,138	6,988	18,557	18,724	2 96	3 85	1·04	1·35	23,658	17,719	18,640
	Non Act labourers — Children	7,772	1,273	246	1,378	2,897	10,669	177	200	40	13	1,232	1,662	9,007	8,813	3·61	4 37	0·50	0 62	10,423	8,292	8,910
	Non Act labourers — Infants	7,821	647	150	1,652	2,449	10,270	219	341	8	10	1,096	1,674	8,596	8,357	5·53	6·72	0·17	0·20	10,120	8,089	8,476
	Total	47,338	6,753	1,982	9.454	18,189	65.527	1,215	1,483	440	393	12,253	15,784	49,743	50,678	4·24	5 42	1·31	1·67	63,545	49,008	50,210
Lakhimpur	Act-VII labourers (adults)	13,304	4 009	330	110	4 449	17,753	464	513	194	189	4,397	5,757	11,996	13,086	5·60	7·60	2·19	2·97	17,423	13,195	12,541
	Non-Act labourers — Adults	9,996	191	299	5,012	5,502	15,498	202	193	53	85	3,512	4,045	11,453	11,397	2·59	3 56	0·90	1·23	15,199	10,696	11,425
	Non-Act labourers — Children	5,546	1,128	47	763	1,938	7,484	104	163	28	9	836	1,140	6,344	6,404	3 59	4 29	0·49	0·60	7,437	5,975	6,374
	Non-Act labourers — Infants	3,890	373	20	972	1,365	5,255	114	128	2	3	661	908	4,347	4,096	4·62	5·88	0·09	0·12	5,235	3,993	4,221
	Total	32,736	5 701	696	6,857	13.254	45,990	884	997	277	286	9,406	11,850	34,140	34,983	4·15	5 49	1·24	1·63	45,294	33,859	34,561
Total	Act VII. labourers (adults)	49,930	15,619	1 320	515	17,454	67,384	1,627	2,132	1,648	1,338	16 267	23,012	44 372	48,861	5·68	7·86	4·51	6·20	66,064	49,295	46,616
	Non-Act labourers — Adults	70,865	2,667	5,160	35,473	43 300	114,165	1,259	1,677	1,470	1 429	31,947	37,782	76,883	77 966	2·69	3 86	2·65	3·82	109,005	74,415	77,174
	Non-Act labourers — Children	26 342	4,541	863	8,680	14,084	50,427	598	685	425	214	7,480	9,402	41,025	40,693	2 58	3 22	1·28	1·62	49 564	38,518	40,859
	Non-Act labourers — Infants	20 957	1,885	386	6,865	9,136	30,093	716	756	119	87	6,091	7,769	22,324	21,251	4 95	6·85	0·69	0.95	29,707	21.104	21,787
	Grand Total	178,095	24,712	7,729	51,533	83,974	262,069	4,200	5,250	3,662	3,068	61,785	77,965	184,104	188,771	3·71	5 09	2·64	3·63	254,340	183,433	186,487

* Returns were not received from 13 gardens, hence the discrepancy with column 12 of the previous year's return.

DIVISIONAL RETURN No. 25 OF 1879.

Return of Imported Labourers on Contracts under Act VII. (B.C.) of 1873, for the year ending 31st December, 1879.

Sex.	Locality of Birthplace.	Number remaining on the books at the end of last year, 1878	Number placed on the books during the year 1879							Number removed from the books during the year 1879										Total deducted during the year 1879, or total of columns 11 to 18.	Number remaining on the books at the end of the year 1879.	Strength on the 1st July, 1879	Annual strength		Actual strength.	Percentage of deaths to		Percentage of desertions to		Remarks.
			Imported.		Received from other gardens.	Returned from imprisonment.	Apprehended as deserters.	Total added during the year 1879, or total of columns 4 to 8.	Total number of labourers, or total of columns 3 and 9.	Transferred to other gardens.	By permanent unfitness under Section 112.	By determination of contract under Section 136.	By redemption under Section 137.	By cancelment under Sections 135 and 124.	Died.		Imprisoned.	Deserted.						First half.	Second half.		Annual strength.	Actual strength.	Annual strength.	Actual strength.	
			By contractors	By garden-sirdars.											First half.	Second half.		First half.	Second half.										
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16		17	18		19	20	21	22		23	24	25	26	27	28
Men	(1) Bengal	7,580	635	720	162	15	43	1,575	9,355	162	42	3,195	36	8	181	220	19	254	218	4,333	5,022	5,738	6,759	5,380	9,193	6·75	4·43	7·80	5·13	
	(2) N.-W. Provinces, Oudh, and Behar	4,748	792	1,275	155	73	44	2,339	7,087	159	81	1,109	1	9	193	288	68	483	339	2,730	4,357	5,056	4,902	4,706	6,932	10·04	6·92	17·05	11·85	
	(3) Chota-Nagpur and Sonthalia	14,229	1,249	4,342	359	110	72	6,132	20,561	369	82	3,316	11	3	514	611	102	434	475	5,908	14,453	15,637	14,933	15,045	20,002	7·50	5·62	6·05	4·54	
	(4) Nepal	5	5	.....	...	....	....	5	10	....	....	2	....	....	.. ..	....	....	2	....	4	6	6	5	6	10	....	....	40·00	20·00	
	(5) Madras	520	17	3	87	4	8	119	639	89	2	121	...	....	20	18	5	23	20	298	341	396	458	368	552	9·25	6·88	10·45	7·78	
	(6) Bombay	33	.....	.....	....	....	....	..	33	....	....	....	....	....	1	3	....	.. ..	4	8	25	32	32	28	33	12·83	12·12	14·28	12·12	
	Total	27,315	2,698	6,340	763	202	167	10,170	37,485	770	207	7,741	48	20	909	1,140	194	1,196	1,056	13,281	24,204	26,865	27,090	25,534	36,722	7·81	5·57	8·54	6·13	
Women	(1) Bengal	7,710	477	637	132	10	19	1,275	8,985	146	34	2,992	27	8	174	176	13	112	81	3,763	5,222	5,850	6,780	5,536	8,853	5·73	3·95	3·11	2·18	
	(2) N. W. Provinces, Oudh, and Behar	3,694	471	669	107	26	35	1,308	5,002	109	51	892	....	12	117	237	19	169	79	1,685	3,317	3,676	3,685	3,496	4,895	9·94	7·23	6·84	5·06	
	(3) Chota Nagpur and Sonthalia	10,964	800	3,515	288	24	30	4,657	15,621	289	70	2,509	10	5	420	562	26	164	115	4,170	11,451	12,252	11,608	11,851	15,833	8·35	6·40	2·38	1·81	
	(4) Nepal	1	.....	.....	....	....	.. ..	....	1	....	....	1	....	....	....	...	....	....	....	1	....	....	....	....	1	....	..	....	.. .	
	(5) Madras	233	12	.....	30	1	1	44	277	32	....	41	....	....	7	16	1	7	7	111	166	205	219	185	247	11·83	9·31	6·97	5·66	
	(6) Bombay	13	.....	.....	....	....	....	....	13	....	..	....	....	....	....	1	....	..	.. .	1	12	13	13	12	13	8·33	7·69	.		
	Total	22,615	1,760	4,821	557	61	85	7,284	29,899	576	155	6,435	37	25	718	992	59	452	282	9,731	20,168	21,996	22,305	21,082	29,342	7·91	5·82	3·25	2·50	
	Grand Total	49,930	4,458	11,161	1,320	263	252	17,454	67,384	1,346	362	14,176	85	45	1,627	2,132	253	1,648	1,338	23,012	44,372	48,861	49,395	46,616	66,064	7·80	5·68	6·20	4·31	

Divisional Return No. 26 of 1879.

Return of Imported Labourers not on Contracts under Act VII. (B.C.) of 1873 *for the year ending the* 31*st December* 1879.

Age.	Sex.	Locality of Birthplace.	Number remaining at the end of last year, 1878.	Additions during the year 1879.							Deductions during the year 1879.								Number remaining at the end of year 1879.	Strength on the 1st July, 1879.	Annual strength.		Actual strength.	Percentage of deaths to		Percentage of desertions to	
				Imported direct.	Otherwise than by importation.			By transfer to adults from minors and to minors from infants.	Total added during the year 1879, or total of columns 6 to 9.	Total of columns 4 and 10.	Transferred to other gardens.	Left the garden with permission.	Left the garden without permission.		Died.		By transfer from minor to adults and from infants to minors.	Total deducted during the half year, or total of columns 12 to 16.					Annual strength.	Actual strength.	Annual strength.	Actual strength.
					Received from other gardens.	Re-engaged on expiry of contract.	Otherwise obtained.						First half.	Second half.	First half.	Second half.					First half.	Second half.						
1	2	3	4*	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14		15		16	17	18	19	20		21	22	23	24	25
Adults	Men	(1) Bengal	16,089	425	1,040	5,489	1,746	137	8,837	24,926	673	6,432	256	270	212	240	....	8,083	16,843	17,805	16,947	17,324	23,886	2·63	1·89	3·06	2·20
		(2) N.-W. Provinces, Oudh, and Behar.	9,055	446	1,002	3,637	1,714	69	5,868	14,923	581	4,597	343	357	197	293	....	6,368	8,555	8,856	8,955	8,705	13,921	5·55	3·51	7·93	5·02
		(3) Chota-Nagpur and Sonthalia.	13,159	441	904	5,527	2,010	273	9,155	22,314	787	5,329	317	276	301	341	....	7,351	14,963	15,289	14,224	15,126	21,410	4·36	2·99	4·04	2·76
		(4) Nepal	37	.....	2	2	15	....	19	56	1	14	2	2	....	....	....	19	37	38	37	37	54	.....	.....	10·80	7·40
		(5) Madras	302	9	11	56	36	1	113	415	6	81	5	8	10	5	....	115	300	299	300	299	404	5·00	3·71	4·83	3·21
		Total	38,642	1,321	2,959	13,711	5,521	480	23,992	62,634	2,048	16,453	923	913	720	879	....	21,936	40,699	42,287	40,464	41,492	59,675	3·88	2·67	4·48	3·07

	Women	(1) Bengal	14,072	462	861	4,148	1,858	127	7,456	21628	557	4,918	160	164	163	261	....	6,223	15,305	15,332	14,702	15,318	20,667	2·80	2·05	2·15	1·56
		(2) N.-W. Provinces, Oudh, and Behar.	6 384	390	644	2,032	1,264	85	4,415	10,799	376	2,873	199	170	151	223	....	3.992	6,807	6,736	6,555	6,766	10,155	5·59	3·68	5·54	3·63
		(3) Chota-Nagpur and Sonthalia.	11,540	477	690	4,342	1,597	265	7,371	18,911	593	4,070	184	176	221	312	....	5,556	13,355	13,406	12,473	13,380	18,221	4·10	2·92	2·78	1·97
		(4) Nepal	12	....	....	....	2	....	2	14	....	2	1	....	....	....	....	3	11	11	11	11	14	.....	....	9·09	7·14
		(5) Madras	215	17	6	28	13	....	64	279	3	54	3	6	4	2	....	72	207	204	209	205	273	2·88	2·19	4·85	3·29
		Total	32,223	1,346	2,201	10,550	4,734	477	19,308	51,531	1,529	11,917	547	516	539	798	....	15,846	35,685	35,679	33,951	35,682	49,330	3·91	2·71	2·05	2·15
		Total Adults	70,865	2,667	5,160	24,261	10,255	957	43,300	114,165	3,577	28,370	1,470	1,429	1,259	1,677	....	37,782	76,383	77,966	74,415	77,174	109,005	3·86	2·69	3·82	2·65
Minors under 16 years, excluding infants under 2 years.	Boys	....	20,618	2,469	483	1,475	1,853	1,417	7,697	28,315	318	3,222	250	136	333	382	480	5,131	23,184	23,001	21,809	23,092	27,832	3·17	2·56	1·72	1·38
	Girls	....	15,725	2,072	380	1,237	1,395	1,303	6,387	22,112	258	2,715	175	78	265	303	477	4,271	17,841	17,692	16,708	17,766	21,732	3·28	2·61	1·47	1·16
		Total	36,343	4,541	863	2,712	3,248	2,720	14,084	50,427	576	5,947	425	214	598	685	957	9,402	41,025	40,693	38,518	40,859	49,564	3·22	2·58	1·62	1·28
		Grand Total	107,208	7,208	6,023	26.973	13,503	3,677	57,384	164.592	4,153	34,317	1,895	1,643	1,857	2,362	957	47,184	117,408	118,659	112,933	118,033	158,569	3·64	2·66	3·06	2·22

* Returns were not received from 13 gardens in the district of Sylhet, hence the discrepancy with column 18 of the previous year's return.